Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 5 MARCH 1985

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Warner, Toowoomba South) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed—

Report of the Department of Harbours and Marine for the year ended 30 June 1984.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under—

Barrier Fences Act 1954-1984

Harbours Act 1955-1982.

EDUCATION 2000—ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Minister for Education): I lay upon the table of the House—

(a) Education 2000—Issues and options for the future of Education in Queensland—a discussion paper; and

(b) Education 2000—Issues and options for the future of Education in Queensland—a summary of the discussion paper.

Ordered to be printed and distributed for public comment and submissions.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Electricity Supply Industry

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (11.2 a.m.), by leave: I wish to make a ministerial statement on the current conditions of the electricity supply industry in the south-eastern part of this State. During the past few days several reports appearing in the media have suggested that the whole of the SEQEB electricity supply system is about to collapse. These statements have been made either by former employees of the board who have been sacked for their refusal to return to work or by State Labor politicians hoping to jump on the bandwagon to try to gain some more publicity for themselves. Let me tell them here and now that they are flogging a dead horse.

As I said last Thursday and repeated last week-end, the electricity supply system in the SEQEB area is operating efficiently and effectively, and any break-downs have been restricted to about 24 hours' duration. But to hear the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) and his so-called spokesman on electricity talk, one more faulty switch and Queensland will all be in darkness for days or even weeks.

As both of those gentlemen are former members of the Electrical Trades Union, I can only assume that they have no comprehension of the modern equipment that now exists in the electricity supply industry. I would never suggest that those honourable members are up the pole when they make such comments but, if either of them would like a familiarisation course on Queensland's supply system, I would certainly see what I could do to accommodate them.

Let me assure honourable members that Queensland is not about to suffer a complete break-down in its electricity supply system, either in south-east Queensland or, indeed, in any other part of this State. The reports that I have received today from senior

engineers of SEQEB clearly indicate that the system and power lines are in good working order.

The main problem in any storm has always been caused by trees growing too close to power lines. However, as the storm season passes, this is of less concern. In fact, SEQEB has now employed several tree-trimming contractors to alleviate this problem.

I can inform the House that the latest information supplied to me by SEQEB is that, apart from isolated local problems that usually occur, there is no risk of major black-outs.

Let me finally give honourable members more precise details of the effects of recent storms and the time factor involved in returning power to consumers.

At 5 p.m. on 6 January last a storm blacked out 40 000 consumers. Eighty per cent of these were returned to power within eight hours and the remainder within 36 hours.

On 18 January a storm blacked out 80 000 consumers, twice as many as during the previous storm. Within 24 hours 76 per cent of these consumers had their power restored, and within 66 hours all other consumers were reconnected.

On 28 February, during the latest storm, 38 000 consumers lost power. Within eight hours 71 per cent were reconnected, 91 per cent within 24 hours and 100 per cent within 48 hours.

That demonstrates the efficiency of the system and, in particular, the efficiency of the service that SEQEB is now providing to its consumers, despite false claims to the contrary.

I repeat that the SEQEB supply system is in an excellent state, and consumers can be assured that, under normal circumstances, it will remain so.

Abolition of State Purchasing Preferences

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology) (11.6 a.m.), by leave: It is appropriate that I report to the Parliament that Queensland, in association with three other States, has agreed in principle and has given certain assurances to proceed towards the abolition of State purchasing preferences.

The four States that have so agreed are Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania. There are good reasons to suppose that New South Wales and Western Australia will follow suit. To allow further consideration by New South Wales and Western Australia, no starting date has yet been set.

Queensland's concurrence with this move is based upon the clear indication that Queensland's industry will be able to compete, and do so successfully, in a free-market situation. It also is based upon assurances that adequate mechanisms will be established to ensure that the dismantling of the preference system is monitored, that there are built-in safeguards to ensure concurrence by all States and that provision be made for certain exceptions.

An advisory committee, with strong Queensland representation, has been established by the Australian Ministers Council for Industry and Technology to see that these processes are fair and equitable to all concerned.

The committee will initially concentrate on the heavy engineering and computer industries, but will ultimately examine the situation in other industries if and as necessary.

The removal of State purchasing preferences will minimise the present unnecessary fragmentation of industry and, I am confident, will result in a leaner but much more competitive industry in this State and round Australia. It is currently cumbersome and costly.

It should be noted, however, that the decision to abolish State purchasing preferences will not prevent any State, including Queensland, from offering its normal range of support and incentives to local companies.

The Queensland Government is supported in this move by industry associations. Industry has found that it cannot long survive, effectively locked out of the biggest markets for Government purchasing in Australia, that is, New South Wales and Victoria.

All that Queensland industry seeks is a fair go against interstate competitors, with safeguards and careful monitoring. A fair go is assured with the several comparative advantages applying here, such as lower taxes, lower workers' compensation premiums and less Government regulation.

The program will be accompanied by a vigorous "Buy Australian Made" policy.

I am convinced that the policy is the right one. However, unions and employers must realise that we will win some, lose some. I am convinced that we will win more than we lose, and the situation will be closely monitored.

I believe that the net effect will be more jobs for Queenslanders. If I thought otherwise I would not have recommended it.

Fire at Rite-Gro, Zillmere

Hon. B. D. AUSTIN (Wavell—Minister for Health) (11.9 a.m.), by leave: It has become necessary for a clear and authoritative statement to be made on the health aspects of the fire at Rite-Gro horticultural suppliers at Zillmere on 30 January.

Officers of the Queensland Health Department were present during the fire and were involved in subsequent investigations which form the basis for my report to the House today.

The Director of the Government Chemical Laboratory (Mr T. Beckmann) was contacted by the fire brigade in the early hours of the morning of 30 January and proceeded immediately to the fire, arriving at approximately 5.15 a.m.

Following an assessment of the situation, which included obtaining details about the materials in the warehouse and recommending that the firemen wear breathing apparatus, Mr Beckmann arranged for officers of the Water Quality Council to be contacted. Following their attendance at the site, it was determined that an earth-wall dam be constructed in the adjacent creek. Mr Beckmann made recommendations on fire-fighting procedures, with particular emphasis on the reduction of the volume of water being sprayed.

The assessment of the situation at that time indicated that most of the pesticides had been ignited because of the very high temperatures of the fire, and that the smoke was going directly upwards and away from nearby residential settlements. It was therefore expected that, by the time the smoke reached surrounding areas of habitation, any residual toxic material would be thoroughly dispersed and unlikely to be a significant hazard.

This was subsequently confirmed by an on-site inspection later in the day, when all containers examined appeared empty and devoid of residue except for a quantitiy of rat poison and powdered fungicide.

Results of samples that were taken by Water Quality Control officers and officers of the Government Chemical Laboratory and were subsequently analysed revealed low-level contamination by a variety of pesticides but high levels of nitrogen and ammonia from contamination by fertilisers.

Following a storm approximately 24 hours later, the temporary dam was found to be breached. It is felt that the death of fish further downstream was due to the nitrogen and ammonia levels rather than the pesticides.

Since the fire, several firemen have contacted the Department of Health with vague symptoms which they attributed to the fire. Several of these have been examined, which included tests of respiratory function and examination of blood for effects of pesticide exposure. No significant abnormalities or any significant effects from pesticide exposure

have been detected. It would be inconceivable for any other persons to have sustained higher levels of chemical contamination from the resulting pollution.

Any symptoms of illness related to the fumes given off the fire itself should have become apparent within 24 hours. Conditions occurring after that time could not have resulted from the fire itself.

An offensive smell noted in the area on the days following the fire would have been due largely to the remaining fungicide, which did not pose a health risk other than from any reaction to the odour itself. Nevertheless, my officers have made contact with a group of medical practitioners in the area to verify reports of a range of illnesses occurring among local residents. The diversity of symptoms and non-specific nature of the illnesses treated does not support the contention that they are related to any particular episode such as the fire on 30 January. Again, the tests on firemen who attended the scene would indicate that local residents had no likelihood of significant chemical contamination from that source. More specifically, there is absolutely no risk that the fire would have had any effect on the outcome of pregnancies among women in the area.

The assessment of the situation following the fire was that the material could be disposed of safely by normal industrial refuse disposal methods. Officers of the Department of Health advised the company of the procedures for safe decontamination of the site and officers were present when the decontamination took place.

In respect of the reported case of a middle-aged man who died on 23 February 1985 from conditions allegedly relating to exposure following the fire, a post-mortem examination was carried out at the direction of the City Coroner. It was found on examination that the man died of myocardial infarction with subsequent rupture of the heart wall. This was due to long-standing coronary artery disease and had nothing to do with the fire.

I am extremely concerned at the way in which circumstances surrounding this whole issue have been deliberately distorted by certain individuals who play on the fears of local residents. Almost every day during the past few weeks, some new and even more frightening problem has been attributed to this incident. Of course, this has done nothing other than generate more groundless cause for concern.

One of those irresponsible few involved in stirring up this issue is the Australian Democrats spokesman, Mr West. This person already has a well-established record for creating unnecessary public alarm about environmental health issues, and the coming local authority elections add another dimension to his involvement on this occasion. More recently, ALP Senator Margaret Reynolds, in typical opportunistic fashion, in Federal Parliament made a statement which was both misleading and misinformed. Without bothering to check her facts, Senator Reynolds launched an inaccurate and cowardly attack on officers of my department who have been involved in the investigations into the Zillmere fire.

My department has always maintained an open and honest approach where issues of public health are concerned. My officers have never failed to carry out thorough and painstaking investigations into any issue where public health and safety is in question. Unfortunately, like any other scientific authority, my department has to contend with the scaremongers and pseudo-experts who profess to have concern about public health, but are usually just seeking a bit of cheap publicity.

It is time that common sense prevailed in respect of the fire at Zillmere. Anyone with any further genuine concerns who makes contact with officers of my department will be treated in a calm and rational atmosphere.

Discussion Paper "Education 2000"

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Minister for Education) (11.15 a.m.), by leave: This morning I tabled a discussion paper "Education 2000—Issues and Options for the Future of Education in Queensland". It has been produced as part of an ongoing review into

the organisational effectiveness and operational efficiency of the Department of Education that I set in motion in July 1983.

The discussion paper is the result of the deliberations of a review task group of senior departmental officers who referred specific problems and tasks to a wide range of key personnel working in the various divisions and regions of my department. Those officers addressed those tasks not only from a professional perspective but from a parental and community viewpoint.

My decision to conduct the review arose out of a belief that Queensland's schools and colleges must be responsive to the changing world.

As the elected representatives of the people, the Government has the responsibility to understand and react to change in our world today. That change permeates almost all areas of human endeavour and includes rapid and ongoing advances in technology, changing patterns of employment, changing community expectations and our understanding of the educative process. All of those factors will have an effect on the quality of education provided for Queenslanders.

The goal of excellence in education can be achieved only if Queensland's schools and colleges remain in tune with community needs and demands. The discussion paper relates to those organisational issues that must be addressed if Queensland's schools and colleges are to remain effective to the year 2000 and beyond.

In particular, the review has identified two major issues concerned with the future development of Queensland's educational institutions. The first of those concerns is the relevance of educational programs and their continuity from stage to stage. The second major issue is the responsiveness and flexibility of institutions to the many competing demands that are made upon them. Most importantly, the paper relates those issues back to the student as the focus of the educative process.

The Queensland Government believes that decisions affecting the future direction of Queensland education should be made following widespread public discussion. That discussion should involve parents, students, employers, professional associations and all those in the community interested in education. That consultation will be enhanced by a series of public meetings to explore the issues raised in the discussion paper presented to Parliament this morning. Those meetings will be conducted throughout Queensland by senior officers of my department and myself. In addition, I have invited interested individuals and organisations to forward their written comments to me by 30 August 1985.

Unfortunately the Government's commitment to widespread public consultation has not been matched by some officials of the Queensland Teachers Union, who have dismissed the review out of hand. Unlike those officials, I have faith in Queensland's teachers to examine rationally the issues raised in the discussion paper and, as professional educators, to make a significant contribution to the ensuing public discussion.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (11.18 a.m.), by leave: Last week, during the debate on the Consumer Affairs Act Amendment Bill, I referred to the fishing knives one can purchase for about $7, and their lack of a cutting edge. This morning, Mr Neville Darke, of N. Darke Agencies, sent me a very fine $11 Kershaw cutting blade, for which I thank him. I advise the House that, as a result of Mr Darke's letter, I will in future confine my criticisms to fishing rods and reels, outboard motors, 15-ft to 20-ft boats and four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (11.19 a.m.), by leave: I refer to the ministerial statement made by the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police (Mr Glasson) on Thursday, 28 February, concerning my allegations about the development lease granted to Lower Cost (Homes) Pty Ltd by the Queensland Government. The Minister went to great

lengths to provide financial information concerning the expected profit to a private company from the development of Crown land to discredit my statements. At best, the financial costings can be regarded as being, in the words of experienced real estate developers in the area, a "bit high" and "padded" Whether the profit to the private developer is $2m, $1m, $500,000 or $200,000, the Minister did not answer why Lower Cost (Homes) Pty Ltd is given preferential and favourable treatment over all other Queenslanders to develop the Crown land—Queenslanders' land—at a profit to that firm.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I should like to know whether the honourable member has been affected personally in any way.

Mr CAMPBELL: Yes, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: A personal explanation is allowed only under those circumstances.

Mr CAMPBELL: I have been misrepresented by what has been said.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member will have to prove to me that his personal explanation is a true personal explanation.

Mr CAMPBELL: In a letter dated 6 July 1982, the Premier's Department advised that the land would be sold by public auction. However, less than two years later, a private development lease was granted by the Governor in Council without public tenders being called. Why was Ted Howard, a member of the National Party's housing and urban land committee, given the opportunity to develop land for a profit when all others were excluded? Why was the Hervey Bay Town Council not given a chance to develop the land and gain a profit to be used for the benefit of all Hervey Bay residents?

In another letter of 14 April 1982, the Premier's Department advised that an area on the subject land would be provided for a primary school.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr CAMPBELL: The Government has reneged on that undertaking to provide a primary school reserve in the proposed residential development.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Bundaberg may find it amusing to do what he did. I remind him that when I am on my feet he must resume his seat immediately. I know that the honourable member remained on his feet because he wanted to get the extra words in. I do not consider the honourable member's statement to be a personal explanation, and I will not allow it to continue.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows—

1. Sewage Treatment Plant, Babinda

Mr MENZEL asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

With reference to the quality of life of the citizens of the Mulgrave Shire—

(1) Is he aware that the Mulgrave Shire Council acted against the advice and recommendation of Gutteridge, Haskins & Davey Pty Ltd and built the sewage treatment plant in the residential part of Babinda to save money instead of locating it in the farming area?

(2) Will he support the people of Babinda to improve the quality of life for residents in the Clyde Road area by forcing the Mulgrave Shire Council to shift the sewage treatment plant and therefore eliminate the foul smell that was imposed on those residents by the Mulgrave Shire Council?

(3) Is he aware of a number of hepatitis cases in Babinda at present which are all in the Clyde Road area next to the Mulgrave Shire sewage treatment plant?

(4) Will he confer with the Minister for Health with a view to immediate action being taken to safeguard the health of Babinda residents?

(5) Is he aware that a Mulgrave shire councillor expressed concern for the quality of life of the Babinda residents because of the proposed western route for the Babinda bypass?

Answer—

(1 & 2) I understand that the present site was selected by the council because it involved rate-payers in the lowest costs of all possible site alternatives and satisfied all environmental criteria. I understand that, following complaints some years ago, the council planted trees to screen the plant and, as a result of advice from its consulting engineers, made certain modifications to its operations.

(3) I am aware that two cases of hepatitis at Babinda were notified to the Department of Health on 7 February 1985. Advice received from that department is that they do not represent an outbreak, nor is there any evidence that the cases are attributable in any way to the Babinda sewage treatment plant.

(4 & 5) I am ready at all times to co-operate with the Minister for Health where the health of any community is shown to be at risk. The plant is inspected three or four times a year by officers of the Water Quality Section of my department. The Government gives high priority to the maximum possible avoidance of injurious effects from projects that it undertakes.

2. Police Raid on Gaming-house, Sunshine Beach

Mr GYGAR asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

With reference to my question in this House on 2 October 1984 regarding a police raid on a suspected gaming-house at Sunshine Beach—

Is he yet in a position to respond to this question and, in particular, is he yet able to explain whether any of the roulette tables or other instruments of gaming seized had previously been in police hands and, if so, how they were disposed of?

Answer—

I am unable to reply to the honourable member's question of 2 October 1984, as court action in respect of alleged unlawful gaming at premises in Duke Street, Sunshine Beach, on 25 August 1984, will not be finalised until 19 June 1985. However, I would like to put his mind at rest by pointing out that at no time did police sell any instruments of gaming back to the owner, particularly for the amount of $10,000.

My information is that police took possession of instruments of gaming, including a roulette wheel, when previous police action was initiated on 23 September 1983 on other premises at Sunshine Beach. However, as the instruments were not forfeited to the Crown, they were returned—not sold—to the owner. Police have not identified these instruments as being the same as those seized on 25 August 1984.

3. Stamp Duty, Home Insurance Policies

Mr GYGAR asked the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer—

With reference to the Government's claims that Queensland is the lowest taxed State and in relation to stamp duty on home and fire insurance policies—

(1) How much Queensland Government stamp duty would a Brisbane resident pay annually on a standard home insurance policy for $40,000 combined with a $12,000 contents cover?

(2) How much State stamp duty would be payable on a similar policy in each other State capital?

(3) Where does Queensland rank in terms of State taxes on this necessary annual expenditure for all Queensland home-owners?

Answer—

(1 to 3) In Queensland, policies of general home insurance attract stamp duty at a rate of 0.07 per cent on the sum insured and the applicable duty is subject to a further limitation that it shall not exceed 25 per cent of the net annual premium on the policy.

New South Wales is the only other State with an insurance scheme similar to that of Queensland's. The duty rate in New South Wales is the same as that which applies in Queensland. The other States base their insurance duty on a percentage of the premium.

Premium rates differ from insurance company to insurance company and from State to State in view of regional factors including risk of cyclones, bush fires and the crime rate, etc., and in view of whether the relevant building is constructed of brick or wood.

Because premiums for a similarly valued house vary markedly from State to State, there would be differences in stamp duty payable between States even if all States adopted the percentage of premiums basis and had the same rate.

Perhaps the way to approach a comparison among the States in this area is to look at the overall costs of insurance, namely, the premium and stamp duty costs combined. In this regard, based on examples of premiums in other States, although there are cases where this combined cost is somewhat lower than in Queensland, duty payable in Queensland for a typical residence and contents is not considered to be too high.

I would make the point that Queensland claims that on average it has the lowest tax rates of any of the States. That does not mean, however, that someone could not search through all the taxes and charges and find individual examples where this is not so.

However, this Government has adopted a responsible approach to State taxation and has managed to provide a very high level of service to the community, while at the same time containing State taxes generally and rejecting the introduction of new taxes such as financial institutions duty and petrol and tobacco taxes which have been imposed in the other States.

4. R & R Constructions, Employee

Mr MACKENROTH asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to an employee of R & R Constructions, a contracting firm engaged by SEQEB for work on electricity lines from Beenleigh to Rocky Point—

(1) Did any employee sustain severe burns in the course of his duties?

(2) If so, what is the extent of his injuries?

(3) What protective clothing was he wearing at the time of this accident?

(4) What training and qualifications had he received before commencing his work on this contract with SEQEB?

Answer—

(1) No.

(2 to 4) Not applicable.

5. Petrol-pricing

Mr ALISON asked the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—

(1) What has been the increase in the price of petrol per litre which has come about through Federal Government policies since the Hawke socialist Government came to power in March 1983?

(2) What is the anticipated increase per litre in the next six-monthly adjustment by the Hawke Government?

(3) Has he made any submissions to the Federal Government to change the system of petrol-pricing in Australia to give relief to motorists and reduce transport costs generally?

(4) How much per litre does the Hawke Government receive from the motorist in the price of petrol?

Answer—

(1) The wholesale price of petrol is set by the Prices Surveillance Authority (PSA). This has been the case since the PSA took over the responsibility from the Petroleum Products Pricing Authority (PPPA) in March 1984.

When the Hawke Government was elected in March 1983, the lowest wholesale price for super motor spirit was 39.84c per litre. Currently, the price is 43.8c per litre, an increase of 3.96c per litre.

(2) The PSA is about to announce new wholesale prices which will take into account the recent fluctuations in the Australian dollar compared with the United States dollar. This is likely to further increase the wholesale price by at least another 1.5c per litre. During the 1983 Federal election campaign, the Hawke Government campaigned on the policy of lower fuel prices.

On that basis, the expected increases will vary in sympathy with the currency fluctuations as well as the normal cost factors.

Overall world parity prices for oil, on which Australian indigenous crude oil is priced, have recently moved downward and indications are that this will continue.

(3) At the Standing Committee of Consumer Affairs Ministers (SCOCAM) meeting on 6 February, I proposed that the Commonwealth should ensure that Australian crude oil prices followed the world trend downward. This would help to offset the rises caused by currency fluctuations. In addition, I suggested that the Commonwealth also remove the excise on petrol from the Consumer Price Index indexation, which provides an ongoing false cost factor. The Deputy Prime Minister (the Honourable Lionel Bowen, MP) undertook to discuss those recommendations, which were supported by all Ministers, including Labor Ministers, with the Federal Ministers concerned.

(4) The Federal Government receives in revenue 23.06c per litre (approximately 53 per cent) of the cost of petrol. That includes excise levy, royalties and excise duty.

In addition to the above, all other States apply State taxes (levies) ranging from 2.17c to 3.61c per litre for super motor spirit. Queensland is the only State which does not levy a tax or fee on petrol.

6. State Emergency Service Emergency Aid Centre, Demands by Public Servant

Mr McPHIE asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

With reference to two occasions in the "Telegraph" newspaper on which mention has been made of a claimed "highly-placed State public servant" charging into one SES emergency aid centre following Brisbane's violent January storm and demanding special treatment—

Did this happen and, if so, did it result in that person obtaining any special treatment because of his claimed position?

Answer—

Briefly, the answers are, "Yes" and, "No"

It is an unfortunate fact of life that, when people are hit by traumatic circumstances and experiences such as the worst storm in living memory in Brisbane, they become emotionally upset and annoyed.

When people suddenly find their homes without roofs, windows, etc., which leaves their valuables open to further storms and damage, this type of demanding-help behaviour is not uncommon. It is a natural reaction for some people when they find themselves victim to disastrous situations. No doubt points of view are expressed that would not normally be voiced.

SES members realise that people in circumstances such as this are under great stress and the majority do not take umbrage at that type of comment, realising that many people are under great emotional and nervous strain.

In this instance, whatever help was available was freely offered, as it was to everyone, regardless of his or her presumed station in life or Government office. This particular person was not given any help that was not provided equally to hundreds of other Brisbane people seeking SES help.

7. Electrical Trades Union Defiance of Industrial Commission Order

Mr McPHIE asked the Premier and Treasurer—

Is the action by the Electrical Trades Union in defying a court order to return to work part of a deliberate and concerted attempt by the socialist Labor Governments and unions in Australia to blatantly use illegal industrial action and discriminatory financial tactics to destroy Queensland's free enterprise economy and Government?

Answer—

The action by the Electrical Trades Union during the power dispute was in direct contravention of the law. On two occasions, the Industrial Commission issued legal orders for those men to return to work. Both times they defied the law.

Now, in this Parliament, we have seen members of the Opposition come out in support of a union that breaks the law. The urgency motion debated in the House last week gave members opposite the opportunity to support the rule of law. Instead, they chose to support their union comrades. For that action the Opposition stands condemned, and that is only one of many reasons why it stands condemned.

There is no doubt that the union action, supported, as it was, by the ALP and its parliamentary members opposite, constituted a blatant use of industrial blackmail against the interests of Queensland and against the interest of free enterprise principles that allow the use of contract labour in the electricity industry.

8. South East Queensland Electricity Board, Statistics

Mr VAUGHAN asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

In relation to the South East Queensland Electricity Board, for each of the financial years from 1977-78 to 1983-84, inclusive, what were the (a) receipts from the sales of electricity, (b) profit/loss, (c) contribution to capital works, (d) contribution to tariff equalisation, (e) the total number of persons employed, (f) total cost of salaries and wages of persons employed, (g) average annual billings per domestic consumer and (h) the increase in electricity charges for domestic consumers?

Answer—

		$000
(a)	1977-78	188 705
	1978-79	219 666
	1979-80	257 733
	1980-81	305 686
	1981-82	366 851
	1982-83	454 328
	1983-84	506 337

		$000
*(b)	1977-78	1 039
	1978-79	463
	1979-80	(1 446)
	1980-81	(3 261)
	1981-82	6 130
	1982-83	7 030
	1983-84	(7 508)

		$000
(c)	1977-78	11 716
	1978-79	31 500
	1979-80	43 400
	1980-81	65 300
	1981-82	75 600
	1982-83	90 700
	1983-84	113 600

		$000
(d)	1977-78	174
	1978-79	1 920
	1979-80	..
	1980-81	1 656
	1981-82	4 800
	1982-83	4 614
	1983-84	2 916

Note: Figures in brackets are negatives.

* The figures quoted are the surplus or deficit as the case may be in the board's Operating Fund at 30 June in the particular financial year. The surplus or deficit was in every case carried forward to or funded in the next financial year.

		$000
(e)	1977-78	3 800
	1978-79	4 015
	1979-80	4 057
	1980-81	4 077
	1981-82	4 118
	1982-83	4 313
	1983-84	4 267

		$000
(f)	1977-78	40 151
	1978-79	45 933
	1979-80	52 719
	1980-81	63 395
	1981-82	75 077
	1982-83	90 901
	1983-84	96 712

		$
(g)	1977-78	191.33
	1978-79	216.41
	1979-80	236.47
	1980-81	266.33
	1981-82	313.41
	1982-83	378.48
	1983-84	416.45

		%
**(h)	1977-78	5.7
	1978-79	9.6
	1979-80	11.7
	1980-81	11.7
	1981-82	14.8
	1982-83	19.6
	1983-84	11.4

** Based on average price per domestic unit sold.

9. Sales of Curragh Coal

Mr VAUGHAN asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to the coal supply agreement between Curragh Queensland Mining Limited and the Queensland Electricity Commission whereby the Gladstone Power Station is to be supplied with 2.2m tonnes of coal per year from October 1983—

(1) How much coal has the Curragh mine supplied under this agreement to 31 January 1985?

(2) How much of this coal has been supplied to the Gladstone Power Station?

(3) Has any of this coal been supplied to any other power station or anywhere else and, if so, to where was this coal supplied and in what quantities?

(4) Has any of this coal been exported overseas or interstate and, if so, to where, in what quantities and at what price?

(5) Does the agreement with the Curragh mine provide for this coal which is surplus to the Queensland Electricity Commission requirements to be resold by the commission?

(6) As the agreement provides for the 2.2m tonnes per year to be increased to 3.9m tonnes per year to supply the Stanwell Power Station and, as the construction of the Stanwell Power Station has been deferred, how does the Queensland Electricity Commission intend to honour the terms of the agreement it has with the Curragh mine?

Answer—

(1) Approximately 2.5 million tonnes.

(2) Approximately 2.4 million tonnes.

(3) Some small quantities have been used for testing and 90 000 tonnes supplied to the Shell Company of Australia Limited was delivered to stockpile at Barney Point.

(4) It is understood that the 90 000 tonnes was ultimately exported to the Philippines and that the price obtained was approved by the Federal Department of Trade.

(5) The agreement does not preclude the sale of surplus coal by the Queensland Electricity Commission.

(6) The commission intends to fulfil its obligations, as the terms and conditions of the agreement are sufficiently flexible to cope with such situations.

10. Legislation on Aboriginal Matters

Mr HENDERSON asked the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs—

With reference to the recent legislation proposed or passed by the ALP Government of Western Australia on Aboriginal matters—

(1) Does the proposed legislation truly reflect ALP Federal policy?

(2) If not, what is the difference?

(3) How similar or dissimilar are the Western Australian proposals to Queensland Government attitudes?

Answer—

(1 to 3) The draft West Australian legislation is not yet complete. It is expected to be introduced into the West Australian Parliament later this week, or next week. Therefore, I am unable, for the information of the honourable member, to compare that legislation with Federal and Queensland policies.

However, I have noted from recent press items that, reportedly, there are only two areas of dispute between the Federal policies and those of the West Australian Premier (Mr Burke). Those relate to the length of time allowed for the lodgment of land claims and the level of compensation payable to Aborigines in the event of mining or exploration proceeding on Aboriginal land.

The draft principles of Federal land rights legislation recently released indicate that a number of land tenures will be subject to claim by Aborigines, although claims must be made within 10 years of the legislation coming into effect. The Federal proposals also preclude any Aboriginal veto of mining or mining exploration, but compensation is payable for damage or disturbance.

In Queensland, no Aboriginal veto on mining will be permitted. The views and recommendations of the Aboriginal trustees will be fully considered, but mining will remain subject to the provisions of the mining Acts.

I must add that that is completely out of kilter with the avowed policies put forward by the Opposition in this place. It now finds itself completely out of step with its colleagues throughout the rest of Australia, who have now come into line with the policies of the Queensland Government.

11. Economic Growth Indicators

Mr FOURAS asked the Premier and Treasurer—

With reference to statements prior to the last State election by Professor Kolsen, Professor of Economics at the Queensland University, who said that "heaven help the people of Queensland if (Sir) Joh Bjelke-Petersen became Premier and Treasurer after the election" and, further, "my serious concern is that he (the Premier) has inspired absolutely no confidence where initiative is needed when growth is subdued or has actually declined. I think we can expect very little from this Government in that regard because it has shown very little understanding of the underlying problems of the (Queensland) economy"—

(1) Is it not correct that every economic indicator since the election, such as employment and unemployment statistics, new car registrations, private investment, housing construction, bankruptcies and business confidence, indicate that Queensland is faring worse than the rest of Australia and that Professor Kolsen's prediction has been accurate?

(2) When will he accept the reality that Queensland's engine of growth, which was the massive investment in infrastructure for the mining boom, has now completely stopped?

(3) When will he announce new economic initiatives to turn round the sharp decline in Queensland economic fortunes?

Answer—

(1 to 3) Once again, the honourable member has indicated quite clearly that he, too, like the professor to whom he has referred, who has been proved to be completely incorrect, is a merchant of doom and gloom. The honourable member feels that this matter is of political advantage to himself. He must know that it is totally incorrect to claim that every economic indicator since the last State election is unfavourable. That is completely wrong. The honourable member should take a look at the skyline. He

would see a dozen or more cranes; he would see many people working on construction sites. The honourable member should go down south—

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for South Brisbane has asked his question and should now listen to the answer.

Answer (continued)—

The poor honourable member cannot contain himself. He knows that he is wrong; he knows that what I say is correct. One can find no construction activity in Sydney or Melbourne, where his colleagues are in power.

As I have arranged for a major statement on the Queensland economy to be made later this week, I do not propose now to undertake a detailed refutation of the honourable member's comments. The honourable member must wake up to the fact that he is entirely incorrect.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Deranged and incoherent!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member for Wolston is always dead right when he is asleep.

12. Rural Adjustment Fund; Rural Reconstruction Fund

Mr CASEY asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to the Rural Reconstruction Board annual report tabled in this House on 27 February and the fact that, although the Queensland sugar industry has been bleeding for three years, the first real assistance given by the State Government was in 1983-84 through the Rural Adjustment Fund and the Rural Reconstruction Fund whereas in 1982-83 only $500,000 was forthcoming—

(1) If things in the industry are as bad as they are being described, why was there still $30m sitting in these two funds at the end of the 1983-84 financial year, 50 per cent more than the total expended in that year, while hardship and misery were still widespread within the sugar industry?

(2) Did he tell the farmers who came to Brisbane on the "sugar train" recently that that sort of money was available to them?

Answer—

(1) Funds available in the Rural Reconstruction and Rural Adjustment Funds consist of moneys held under various schemes to provide financial assistance to rural producers, repayments from borrowers to be repaid to the Commonwealth and State funds, and accumulated reserves to provide for losses associated with assistance made available for ongoing structural adjustment schemes. The high risk nature of the assistance means that the possibility of large losses occurring is significant, particularly if an industry suffers a prolonged economic downturn. It should be clearly understood that the Queensland Government is responsible for repayment to the Commonwealth regardless of whether or not the Rural Reconstruction Board has been repaid by growers.

The reserve funds in question have accumulated over some 14 years and have assisted the Rural Reconstruction Board in dealing with the crisis in the wool industry in the early 1970s, followed by beef industry adjustment problems of the mid '70s. Included in the balances at the end of June 1984 was an amount of approximately $5m awaiting draw-down by cane-growers whose applications for assistance had been approved in 1983-84, and a similar figure awaiting repayment to the Commonwealth in relation to assistance given to producers in all industries. As at 30 June 1984, the total debt due to the Commonwealth was $45m. The State must guarantee full repayment to the Commonwealth and must therefore bear all losses, including total losses, should those occur.

In 1983-84, the State allocated $12.3m to the sugar industry, and in the current year the State has made available a further special allocation of $5m for carry-on finance and debt reconstruction in addition to the normal funds available to the board. Applications are still being accepted and funds made available to eligible growers.

Loans available under Part A to the sugar industry for debt reconstruction are limited to $40,000. However, should there be a need to provide assistance at a higher level to achieve some special arrangement, the board can use Part A funds and Part B funds provided by the State as well. Debt reconstruction loans are for the normal Part A period of up to 20 years at an interest rate of 8.5 per cent. The State has approached the Commonwealth requesting that the rate charged by the Commonwealth on Part A funds be reduced from 8 per cent to 4 per cent. However, the Commonwealth has not agreed to this recommendation. The limit of $40,000 has not prevented the board from extending the level of assistance it has considered appropriate, having regard to total funds available.

(2) Full details of assistance measures available to cane-growers were well publicised, and I am quite sure that all growers are well aware of the nature of assistance available.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Queensland's Economy

Mr WARBURTON: In asking a question of the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, I refer to the fact that part of the Government's 1984-85 Budget was the so-called $600m Special Capital Works Program, which the Premier and Treasurer said would sort out the State's unemployment problems, and to the fact that the 1984-85 financial year is three-quarters over, yet last Thursday the Deputy Premier told the House, when making reference to the Special Capital Works Program—

"So far, only a couple of million dollars of that has been spent."

I now ask: In light of the fact that the State's unemployment is the highest in Australia and the State's economy is in tatters, what is the reason for the Government's failure to meet its 1984-85 Budget commitment?

Mr GUNN: I assure the honourable member that the Queensland Government will meet that commitment. Recently, I said that a couple of million dollars had already been spent on planning, etc. Tenders worth more than $100m have been accepted by the Works Department. The Opposition always adopts a negative approach. It is no wonder that members opposite are on the Opposition benches. They will never recognise the positive growth that has occurred in this State.

I will state some facts. As to exports—Queensland is the nation's biggest export State. Last year, Queensland's exports were worth $5.4 billion. Mining and agriculture are Australia's principal export-earning sectors. As I knew that the Leader of the Opposition would raise this matter, I obtained this material. In 1983, Queensland produced 22 per cent of the nation's mining output and 23 per cent of the nation's agricultural output. As the Leader of the Opposition well knows, Queensland has only 16 per cent of the nation's population.

As to the building industry—in the five-year period to June 1984, Queensland's building industry grew at an average annual rate of 21.4 per cent compared with the Australian average of 15 per cent. In December 1984, Queensland—with 16 per cent of the nation's population—accounted for almost 26 per cent of the value of all new building approvals throughout Australia. December building approvals were for a record $322.7m of new building work, an increase of $77.6m on the previous month. By comparison, New South Wales figures dropped by 19 per cent ($84m) and Victoria dropped by 37 per cent.

As to tourism—Queensland leads national tourist investment with developments totalling $2.2 billion under construction or in firm planning stages. They include plans

for eight international hotels in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast alone. Fifteen international airlines and air charter companies want to start operations in Queensland but have been knocked back by the Federal Government. No-one knows about that more than the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen), who has been trying to attract those companies to Queensland.

As to petroleum exploration—Queensland is the major target of a record-breaking $800m onshore petroleum search effort by the Australian oil and gas industry this financial year. Half of the planned 100 onshore wells will be drilled in Queensland, and about 19 500 km of the seismic total will be within the State.

As to population growth—Queensland has topped the 2.5 million mark with an increase of 33 518 (1.4 per cent) in the year to June 1984. The national average was 1.1 per cent.

As to coal production—a record 50.8 million tonnes was produced in 1984, up from 37.1 million tonnes. That gives honourable members some indication of the position. However, from Opposition members we hear about the doom and gloom. By now, it must be running fairly dry.

Extended Trading Hours

Mr WARBURTON: In directing a question to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, I refer to his Government's decision that will undoubtedly drive a further nail into the coffin of small business. I ask: Is he aware that over the past 10 years applications lodged with the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission for extended trading hours have in each instance been supported by major chain store interests but opposed by the small business retail section? Is he also aware that in every case overwhelming evidence showed no justification for extended hours? If the Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce wants deregulated trading hours, why has it not seen fit to lodge an application with the State Industrial Commission? Is it not a fact that the Minister and his Government have succumbed to pressure from the Kornhauser/Curry/Bishop lobby, despite evidence that the majority of retailers and their employees oppose the move for extended trading hours?

Mr LESTER: I am well aware of the matters raised by the Leader of the Opposition. The answer to the last part of his question is a most definite, "No".

The subject of trading hours is a major issue in all States of Australia, and is certainly the case in Tasmania. The ALP mates of the honourable member for Sandgate (Mr Warburton) in Victoria have imposed a $250,000 fine on somebody who violated trading hours in that State. Only the other day, that trader attempted to serve a writ on the Premier of Victoria (Mr Cain). Mr Cain would not accept the writ. New South Wales also has had problems.

I point out that this is merely a trial to establish the true situation once and for all. The consumers must also be considered. I point out also that all States are watching with interest what the Queensland Government is doing. At least this Government is giving the public an opportunity to determine the matter of trading hours once and for all.

Kangaroo Quota

Mr NEAL: I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: What is the attitude of the Queensland Government to the recently announced quota of 1.08 million for the harvesting of kangaroos in this State? Has that figure been accepted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and industry in general? Can the Minister comment on the recent tour of western Queensland by the Senate select committee on animal welfare?

Mr McKECHNIE: The Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service has not yet accepted the quota. I have written a letter to the Federal Minister for Home Affairs and Environment (Mr Cohen) seeking a review of the matter.

It is the opinion of the Queensland Government that a safe harvest of 1.5 million kangaroos can take place each year. The Commonwealth Government has given a quota of only 1.08 million. The Federal Government has not justified its decision not to allow the quota that was sought by the Queensland Government. I have sought clarification of the matter, as well as a review of the situation.

Honourable members may be interested to know that last year the Commonwealth Government claimed that New South Wales has more kangaroos than Queensland. That claim was based on figures supplied to the Commonwealth Government by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in New South Wales. Of course, that is a ridiculous statement. The Federal Government's facts and figures should be checked.

The Commonwealth requested that the Queensland Government count the number of kangaroos in this State. That is not possible. This Government claims that Queensland has at least 17 million kangaroos. The number is probably well above that figure. Certainly, kangaroos are in abundance in this State.

Senator Georges has been travelling round Australia with a committee looking at the kangaroo industry. I am very concerned about views held on the matter by Senator Georges which were publicised recently. Senator Georges said that he did not really care about the kangaroo industry; he cared only for the kangaroos. It is a great shame that the Labor Party has a senator who is so unconcerned about employment in rural areas—so unconcerned about the shooters that he makes statements such as that.

The Greenpeace movement has threatened to disrupt the kangaroo industry physically. I warn that movement and point out that that would be very foolish. Any kangaroo-shooter worth his salt—and most of them are professionals—would not be shooting in a paddock in which there are many people but, if people go out unannounced and get in the way, they will put themselves into a very dangerous situation.

Yesterday I was asked by a few members of the press whether, in my opinion, someone might be deliberately shot. I believe that kangaroo-shooters are responsible people. The accidental shooting of a person would be the last thing that kangaroo-shooters would want to do, and they would not do it. However, people must understand that the situation is dangerous. If someone goes into the paddocks in an attempt to interfere with the livelihood of another person, and sneak about at night-time, it is possible that such people may be mistaken for a kangaroo, and I think that that is fair comment.

It must also be understood that from the point of view of protecting kangaroos the kangaroo industry is conducted in a very humane way. Professional kangaroo-shooters normally shoot kangaroos through the head in a clean kill and, if the industry is abolished, obviously graziers and farmers will still protect their crops and their grasslands by continuing to kill kangaroos. However, farmers and graziers would not be able to cope with killing all of the kangaroos themselves, and they would organise kangaroo-shooting drives, which were often held in the past. The problem is that the people who take part in kangaroo-shooting drives are not professionals, and more often than not animals are wounded rather than killed.

The greatest danger comes from people who are members of interest groups, such as the Greenpeace movement. If it were to control culling, a less humane method would be in operation than exists at present.

In conclusion, I say to the honourable member that the Queensland Government has not accepted or rejected the Commonwealth offer at this stage. Negotiations are still taking place. I implore people, such as members of the Greenpeace movement, to act sensibly and not interfere in a very efficient industry which employs many people in the wonderful State of Queensland.

Closure of Metropolitan Regional Abattoir, Cannon Hill

Mr BURNS: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to widespread rumours in the Cannon Hill area that the Metropolitan Regional Abattoir Board at Cannon Hill has been told to sell or lease the abattoir or to close it within three weeks. At least 452 people are employed on a regular basis at this meatworks and provide a strong economic base for local business people. The workers at the works and their families, and local business people, are naturally concerned at these rumours.

As the people who work at Cannon Hill—many of them for over 30 years—are entitled to know what prospects they have of continued employment, I ask: Will the Minister advise the House now of the details of the Government and the meat authorities' proposals to sell or lease Cannon Hill? Has a deadline been set? Will the works be leased or sold? Who are the principal private operators negotiating to purchase or lease the works? More importantly, what arrangements will be made to ensure continuity of employment, long service leave, superannuation, etc., for those working at Cannon Hill to date?

Mr TURNER: I am unaware of rumours about the closure of the abattoir in approximately three weeks' time. It is news to me. However, the operations and the efficiency of the Cannon Hill abattoir have been causing concern over a long period. Meetings of representatives of the Livestock and Meat Authority, the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer and I have taken place to ascertain what assistance can be given to maintain the operations of the abattoir. Another meeting is scheduled for next week but, at this particular time, I am not disposed to say what will happen.

Mr Burns: Is it true that attempts are being made to sell or lease the abattoir?

Mr TURNER: The Government is examining all available options. No-one has been picked out as a buyer and no decision has been taken as to the future of the abattoir to date. As I said before, rumours that the abattoirs will close in approximately three weeks' time are news to me. As Minister for Primary Industries, I know nothing about such rumours. However, I reiterate that meetings have been held and will continue to be held and that the interests of all parties will be closely examined.

Government Assistance to Fish Management Authority

Mr BURNS: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Did the Treasury advise the Fish Management Authority that previous financial support given from the State Government in 1982-1983 and 1983-1984 would not be continued this year? Why has the National Party Government removed this assistance? Is the Minister aware that, as a result of this Treasury instruction, the Fish Management Authority has increased licence fees for restricted buyers by 100 per cent from $30 to $60, and all other fees in a similar manner?

As the Queensland fishing industry is depressed, with many fishermen forced to leave the industry or live at subsistence level, what additional action will be taken by the Government to assist this industry, in view of the moneys previously given but now taken away by the National Party Government.

Mr TURNER: I understand that negotiations are currently taking place with the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer to ascertain the kind of assistance that can be given to the Fish Management Authority. Until the finalisation of those meetings, I would not be in a position to answer the question in its entirety as requested by the honourable member.

Mr Burns: If that assistance is coming, why have they doubled the fees?

Mr TURNER: If the honourable member would like to place the question on notice, I will get a more detailed answer. But, as I indicated, at the moment, meetings are going on between the Treasury and the Fish Management Authority.

ABC Program "Kindergarten"

Mr JENNINGS: I ask the Minister for Education: Is he aware of an article that appeared in today's press stating that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation will cease broadcasting the children's radio program "Kindergarten" because of some spurious claims by the Women's Electoral Lobby that the program is sexist and biased in favour of boys? If the Minister is aware of that article, will he advise the House of the Government's attitude towards radio kindergarten programs?

Mr POWELL: People who read the "Daily Sun" today must have been absolutely astounded at the attitude of the management of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, if in fact the article is correct. I cannot for the life of me understand why an organisation for which I used to have regard would bow to the dictates of a small group of people from Cairns and take off the air a most valuable pre-school program that has been running for a great many years. The program is particularly important to young mothers who live in isolated parts of the State and have little opportunity to enrol their children in a pre-school or kindergarten. The program has always been devised positively and well. It provides a great educational opportunity for young children living in isolated areas.

The taking off the air of that program for, as the honourable members says, the spurious reasons given by some members of the Women's Electoral Lobby—that boys are mentioned more often than girls—is the most disgusting thing I have heard for a long time. Those members of the Women's Electoral Lobby should be included in the same category as those stupid left-wing people who want W. E. Johns's Biggles books and Enid Blyton books removed from library shelves simply because those books adopt a moralistic attitude. I suggest that those people who want "Kindergarten" taken off the air and Biggles and Enid Blyton books removed from library shelves are concerned only with trying to manipulate children. Children want to read and hear stories that are simple and have a message, but those people from Cairns have been able to persuade the ABC that that is not the case.

If we in this country bow down to a minority left-wing group who are not even elected to Parliament, it is a sad day for democracy.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for South Brisbane.

Aboriginal Land Rights

Mr JENNINGS: In directing a question to the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs, I refer to the agreement between the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and the Western Australian Premier (Mr Burke) that the Commonwealth Government would not implement Mr Holding's extremist Aboriginal land rights legislative proposals in Western Australia, and that the Western Australian Government could go it alone. I now ask: Will the Minister advise the House whether that is an indication that the Western Australian Premier and the Western Australian Labor Government, and now the Prime Minister, recognise the wisdom of the Queensland Government's progressive policies in regard to Aboriginal and Islander affairs?

Mr KATTER: It is quite extraordinary that Opposition members, having listened to the two questions on this subject that have already been asked this morning, can continue to hold a straight face—again and again last year during the debate on the community services legislation they demanded mining rights for Aborigines—because now they are revealed as the only group across the political spectrum in Australia still advocating mining rights for Aboriginal people. It gives me no great joy to state that, unfortunately, the Liberal Party also adopted that attitude. The National Party Aboriginal affairs parliamentary committee was the only group in Australia that disagreed with the concept of giving mining rights to Aborigines. Even a number of mining companies disagreed with us. However, we consistently and forcefully stood behind the principle

that there should be equal rights for whites and people of Aboriginal descent who live on reserves—equal rights for both groups. Although at the time no-one in Australia agreed with us, the Liberal Party has now changed its position completely. I must admit that Roger Shipton, who now holds the portfolio, has always been consistent in his personal view. The rest of Australia is now behind us. It is a magic victory for what was, at the time, a fairly courageous stand by the National Party in this Parliament.

The development figures for the Northern Territory, which was the first State or Territory to give mining rights to people of Aboriginal descent on reserves, are quite astounding. Unfortunately I am relying on my memory for the figures. Aboriginal people on reserves were given mining rights seven years ago. Those reserves encompass 48 per cent of the entire surface area of the Northern Territory. Since the mining rights were given to them, 140 applications have been made for mining rights and authorities to prospect in the Northern Territory. In the last seven years, of those 140 applications, not one has gone to an Aboriginal-owned reserve area. Those people have been left totally without development or employment opportunities. Quite frankly, that is a result of the stupidity of the ALP and the Liberal Party. Although the ALP and the Liberal Party in the rest of Australia have changed their position, ALP members in Queensland have not changed their stand and are now in an isolated position in Australia.

Fires at Gatton

Mr FITZGERALD: In asking a question of the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services, I refer to a serious fire that occurred on the western outskirts of Gatton on the night of Friday, 22 February, when a warehouse containing a quantity of insecticide, fungicide, herbicides and fertilisers was destroyed by fire. I understand that another fire occurred in Gatton last night. I now ask: Have safety officers of the Minister's department investigated complaints that the volunteer firemen were protected inadequately in the hazardous situation? Are media statements correct that the local fire brigade board had been denied funding for protective clothing?

Mr TENNI: I thank the honourable member for his question. I asked for a report on both fires. I have here the Gatton Fire Brigade report and I will read it to the House. The Gatton Fire Brigade had 14 personnel on the fire ground. Six men were taken to the Gatton hospital. Four were released after treatment and the remaining two were released after a period of retention. A medical check has been arranged for all personnel who attended the blaze.

The Toowoomba Fire Brigade sent one pump with an officer and two firemen to attend. No ill-effects have been reported by the Toowoomba Fire Brigade personnel who attended. Two QATB officers were also affected, and one has been transported to the Royal Brisbane Hospital.

The Gatton Fire Brigade issued leather ankle boots for fire-fighting and those worn into the fire are now contaminated. The Toowoomba Fire Brigade personnel wore chemical suits incorporating impervious boots. Those suits are gas-tight, and breathing apparatus is worn in conjunction with them. They afford full protection.

The Gatton Fire Brigade has six breathing apparatus sets and six spare cylinders. All six sets were used at the fire.

The Toowoomba Fire Brigade provided two breathing apparatus sets for use by their own personnel and six spare cylinders. The request for assistance from the Gatton Fire Brigade chief officer referred to chemicals being involved but did not specify that additional breathing apparatus sets were needed. Consequently, only additional spare cylinders were sent from Toowoomba. A total of 19 air cylinders were used. Two men wearing breathing apparatus were among those who were affected.

During the fire the local authority was called. That led to the digging of a drain and a dam so that fire run-off was contained for disposal.

The chief officer is reported to have said that he had budgeted for protective clothing but had been refused. The clothing that he budgeted for was woollen fire tunics, which would provide no defence against the toxic products released from this type of fire. His statement was completely incorrect and was a little mischievous. Gas suits as worn by the Toowoomba personnel in this fire and, for less dangerous chemicals, splash suits, are the types of protective clothing appropriate for use in dealing with chemical incidents.

Despite the risk at Mullers Ltd being known to the Gatton Fire Brigade Board, it did not budget for that type of clothing.

The boards have the right to spend their money on matters that they believe to be the most urgent, and the first priority should be the protection of their own men. I am somewhat surprised that in previous years the Gatton Fire Brigade Board did not allocate funding to provide for the total protection of its men. I am sure that the board and the fire chief have learnt a lesson and that this problem will never arise again in the future. I imagine that the board will be providing funds to buy the correct uniforms to protect its men.

Re-employment of Sacked SEQEB Employees

Mr FITZGERALD: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: As claims have been made that some of the families of the striking SEQEB employees are now suffering badly from a lack of income, could those employees be re-employed?

Mr I. J. GIBBS: The Government issued a paper that set out certain conditions under which the Government would consider re-employing those SEQEB employees. The linchpin to their re-employment—and I emphasise "re-employment", not reinstatement, which is the word used by the unions—was that the operators had to restore full power, which they did. The second matter was that the 600 operators had to sign a no-strike agreement.

The union leaders have not played much of a role in this matter. I am disappointed that they have not explored that avenue for the settlement of the dispute. If that agreement had been achieved, 30 days later the SEQEB men were to be re-employed, and six months later the Government was to look at returning their privileges, such as superannuation, and so on. It is disappointing that the union leaders have not proceeded to try to achieve that end. I am disappointed about that because I know that many of those operators are willing to sign such a document.

After the last debacle, the union leaders led the men by ill-advising them and doing all sorts of things. That showed bad leadership and led to the present position. I have spoken to quite a few of those operators and I know that they are willing to sign such an agreement. I have also talked to many SEQEB people who are friends of mine—I have known them for years—and they have told me that they are quite happy to return to work and to be re-employed on a no-strike basis and for 38 hours a week.

It appears as though the unions, through a lack of activity in trying to encourage a strike-free situation to be established with the operators, are willing to throw the former SEQEB employees to the wolves—not stick up for them or try to achieve a settlement of the dispute.

The employees should be aware that the settlement is based on a principle that does not apply in a boiler-maker's shop, a blacksmith's shop or a similar establishment. It will apply in the electricity industry, which is an industry that affects every man, woman and child in the State and also the State's economy. Recently, we have seen how much the dispute has cost the State. The union leaders will not come forward and say that they will apply a different principle to the electricity industry, although they did put forward a paper that contained some advances. The Government has moved a long way from its original stand, and I wish that the union leaders would try to co-operate. In that way they could achieve the re-employment of the men whom they are now throwing to the wolves.

Proposed Increase in Number of Parliamentarians

Mr WHITE: In directing a question to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, I refer to today's press reports that the Government intends to increase the number of politicians in the Queensland Parliament. I ask: Is he aware that this nation has more politicians per head of population than any other country in the Western World? Does he know that the recent collusion of the Australian Labor Party and the National Party in the Federal Parliament to increase the number of Federal politicians will cost the tax-payers of Australia approximately $10m?

Is it true that the recent amendments to the City of Brisbane Act, jointly sponsored by the Labor Party and the National Party, which created an additional six Brisbane City Council politicians, will cost the rate-payers of Brisbane an additional $2m? Will he inform the House how much the projected additional five or six politicians will cost the poor and long-suffering tax-payers of this State?

Mr HARPER: When the Government has made a decision in this matter, the facts and details will be made available to the honourable member. I understand that, in the past, he has not hesitated to have, with members of opposing parties, discussions in matters relating to his interests. When a firm decision is taken by the Government, the information will be made available to the House by the Premier and Treasurer.

Flea Markets

Mr WHITE: I refer the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs to continuing complaints from small business and, in particular, retail traders about ongoing commercial activities at flea markets, and I ask: Is he aware of the ongoing complaints of legitimate retailers about the activities of some de facto retailers operating on a commercial basis in flea markets? Will he take any legislative action, as promised last year, in the light of the recent Government inquiry? If not, what action does the Government intend to take to give legitimate retailers a fair go against the activities of de facto retailers who are in breach of the Factories and Shops Act, the Health Act and local government regulations?

Mr LESTER: A considerable inquiry is being carried out into the operations and activities of flea markets. Because the consumers, or those who buy at flea markets, are aghast that the Government might be considering any changes, the inquiry has not been completed. The Government is still working on the matter in an attempt to find a solution that is suitable and acceptable to everyone.

Youth Unemployment in Logan City

Mr D'ARCY: I ask the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs: Is he aware that Queensland's rapidly growing unemployment problem, which now stands at 11.1 per cent, is worse in the outlying suburbs of Brisbane than anywhere else in the State? In some areas the figure among young people is as high as 20 per cent. Because the Minister last week opened an unemployment summit for the Logan city area, I ask him to state what special initiatives his department is undertaking to deal with the special needs of Logan city.

Mr LESTER: I am very glad that the honourable member has asked this question. This morning, the Premier and Treasurer and I launched a program called "Bridging the Gap", which is designed to help young people find work and to assist young people to present themselves properly to prospective employers. The program is the brain-child of Mr Fred Phillips, who has helped to place 1 400 young people in work. The Rotary Club of Brisbane is supporting the scheme. This morning, as Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, I made a grant to that organisation of $25,000, which will provide an office and an assistant to help young people in their quest to find work.

The function to which the honourable member referred at Logan city was particularly successful and, if the people involved with it have any further suggestions that they would like to put forward to me, I will certainly make an assessment of them.

Queensland's Economy

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, I refer to an article in last Sunday's "Sunday Mail" which purports to be a study of Queensland's economy. I now ask: Does the report have any significant regard for the facts and does it justify the exaggerated treatment that it has received in the media?

Mr GUNN: I did see the report. At the present time my department is examining it and seeking equal space to lodge a reply in the next "Sunday Mail".

On the surface the report appears to be nothing more that a gigantic beat-up. The report was written by a Mr Phil Day, who is a town-planner, not an economist. I am told that he used to work for the Brisbane City Council but former Lord Mayor Clem Jones sacked him. He then applied for a job with the Minister for Local Government, who would not wear him. Now he appears to be advising "The Sunday Mail" Half of the report deals with town-planning.

The author of the article got 12 post-graduates to assume they were top-level public servants. I would give them three out of 10 for their work. However, they were right on one matter. For years the Government has been trying to tell the Opposition what these people found—that Queensland's taxes are much lower than those in New South Wales and Victoria. They also said that one of the problems in Queensland was not having a big manufacturing base. I draw to the attention of honourable members a heading in "The Australian Financial Review" which states, "Rhetoric can't conceal Victoria's economic woes" That article was written by an economist who said that Victoria's problem was that is has a manufacturing industry that has been propped up by the Federal Government. That is quite correct.

I will cite to the House the level of tariff protection enjoyed by Victoria. It receives a per-capita protection by way of subsidy of $430; New South Wales receives $294; South Australia receives $292; Tasmania receives $211; Western Australia receives $145; and Queensland receives only $123.

The article states that, if Victoria was able to export its products and have the mineral wealth that Queensland has, it would be in a different position. That article is absolutely contradictory to the article in "The Sunday Mail".

I have already told the Leader of the Opposition that south-east Queensland is now a centre for heavy engineering. The Government brought the Vickers organisation up from Victoria; it was very pleased to get out of that State. BHP will be constructing a rolling plant, and a mini-steel-mill is to be constructed. As well as that, there is the expansion of Comsteel/Vickers. The Government does not have to apologise for what is happening in this State. I advise the honourable member that if he looks at the next "Sunday Mail" he will find an article written by the State Government that will tell the truth.

Mr DAVIS: I have a question without notice for the Premier and Treasurer, but he is not here. I wish Ministers would be present to answer questions.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Casey: There is no Executive Council today.

Mr DAVIS: No. That is usually the excuse.

Electricity Dispute; No-strike Agreements

Mr DAVIS: As the Minister for Mines and Energy has already stated this morning that the dismissed SEQEB employees will be re-employed only on their signing a document that has been shown to the unions, will the Minister table a copy of that document in the House so the Parliament can see it?

Mr I. J. GIBBS: The State Government document setting out the basis for the re-employment of the dismissed SEQEB workers and the union document in reply to it are both public documents which are freely available.

Mr DAVIS: Mr Speaker, a question without——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Did the honourable member table his first question?

Mr DAVIS: No, I did not table a question; I wanted to ask a question of the Premier and Treasurer, but he was not in the Chamber.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Did the honourable member table his first question?

Mr DAVIS: No, I did not table it; I asked whether——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind the honourable member that I am on my feet.

Mr DAVIS: Well, you asked me.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DAVIS: You asked me a question; when I get up, you say, "I am on my feet."

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member under Standing Order No. 123A. The honourable member can look round as much as he likes. I have asked the honourable member a question. Did he table his first question? When I sit down, the honourable member can then ask a question.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: It is very funny to all honourable members.

Mr DAVIS: The answer is, "No"

Loans by Building Societies for Kit Homes

Mr DAVIS: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: Is it a breach of the Act for building societies to lend on kit homes? I also ask: Is the Minister aware of whether the SGIO Building Society is lending on kit homes? If not, will he investigate whether the SGIO Building Society is lending on kit homes?

Mr HARPER: The SGIO Building Society, as such, is not a responsibility of my portfolio. Building societies generally are my responsibility. I suggest that the honourable member redirect his question to the Honourable the Premier and Treasurer.

Mr DAVIS: I do so accordingly.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time allotted for questions has now expired.

ELECTRICITY (CONTINUITY OF SUPPLY) BILL

Suspension of Standing Orders

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the immediate presentation to the House of a Bill to declare with respect to securing

continuity of supply within the electricity industry; the passing of such Bill through all its stages this day; and if debate be not concluded by 4.45 p.m., the Chairman and the Speaker as applicable shall put all remaining questions necessary to dispose of the remaining stages without further amendment or debate."

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 47	
Ahern	Lester
Alison	Lickiss
Austin	Lingard
Bjelke-Petersen	Littleproud
Booth	McKechnie
Borbidge	McPhie
Cahill	Menzel
Chapman	Miller
Cooper	Muntz
Elliott	Newton
FitzGerald	Powell
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell
Glasson	Row
Goleby	Simpson
Gunn	Stephan
Gygar	Stoneman
Harper	Tenni
Harvey	Turner
Henderson	Wharton
Hinze	White
Innes	
Jennings	
Katter	*Tellers:*
Knox	Kaus
Lane	Neal

NOES, 30	
Braddy	Warner, A. M.
Burns	Wilson
Campbell	Yewdale
Casey	
Comben	
D'Arcy	
De Lacy	
Eaton	
Fouras	
Gibbs, R. J.	
Goss	
Hamill	
Kruger	
Mackenroth	
McElligott	
McLean	
Milliner	
Palaszczuk	
Price	
Shaw	
Smith	
Underwood	
Vaughan	*Tellers:*
Veivers	Davis
Warburton	Prest

Resolved in the affirmative.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr I. J. Gibbs, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (12.31 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Basically, the purpose of this Bill is to translate into statute law the provisions of the Orders in Council made during the state of emergency and proclaimed under the State Transport Act 1938-1981 affecting employment in the Queensland electricity supply industry.

The reaction of the general public to the damaging industrial action taken by electricity supply industry employees over the last few weeks has given the Government a clear and simple message. The general public will no longer tolerate strikes, bans or limitations that affect, or are likely to prejudice, the continuity of electricity supply.

Therefore, industrial action of this kind in the electricity industry must, and will, be outlawed.

The Bill provides—

In clause three, that the Electricity Commissioner is permanently given powers to have work done and to direct any person to do work to ensure a normal supply of electricity for consumers.

In clause four, a penalty of summary dismissal and also, upon conviction, a penalty of up to $1,000.

In clause five, that obstruction or harassment of a person who is working to ensure the continuity of a supply of electricity is an offence.

In clauses six, seven and eight, the Government seeks to ensure that the sackings of those South East Queensland Electricity Board employees who defied an Industrial Commission order stand; that the contracts entered into by new employees of SEQEB, which contain no-strike clauses, are ratified; and that, in accordance with the peace plan of the Government, any sacked employee who is re-employed will work under similar conditions to those new employees.

Clause nine provides that penalties under the Act are recoverable as civil penalties, and cannot be discharged by imprisonment in default of payment.

The Government knows that this Bill is only the first stage in the important task of restoring industrial stability to the electricity supply industry in Queensland. The second stage will require more detailed work, and will set up a separate tribunal to deal with industrial matters in the electricity supply industry.

The Trades and Labor Council of Queensland actually proposed to the Government the establishment of an electricity industry consultative council comprising representatives of Government, the industry and the Trades and Labor Council of Queensland. The TLC believed that such a council would assist in the identification and resolution of problems within the industry.

There will be some opposition to the Bill. However, I am sure that there will be great support for the Bill from the general public. Also, the vast majority of electricity workers will be happy to get on with the job of supplying electricity to the public of Queensland. They are sick and tired of being involved in industrial disputes in which they have no personal stake but which cost them and their families dearly.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (12.34 p.m.): Introduction of this Bill into the House today, particularly at such short notice——

Mr FitzGerald: The honourable member knows nothing about it.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I request that honourable members on both sides of the Chamber restrain themselves in order to allow the debate to proceed.

Mr VAUGHAN: The introduction of this Bill, particularly at such short notice, is an indication that the Government intends to circumvent the provisions of the State Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and to perpetuate the grave problems facing Queensland at present. As members have read in the press, the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) has finally agreed to lift the state of emergency that he imposed on Thursday, 7 February.

In the late hours of Thursday, 7 February, the Cabinet met and, in consultation with the Governor of this State, who has been misused by the Government, implemented a decision that has plunged the State's electricity industry into virtual chaos. Following the introduction of the state of emergency on 7 February, the Government introduced a series of Orders in Council in order to prop up the decision that it had made.

The brief statement made by the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) when he introduced this Bill does not accurately outline exactly what the Government intends to do. The fact is that the Government has introduced legislation that will force working people in this State to work under conditions determined and dictated by the Government. That will not work. Throughout history, attempts have been made to embark on a similar course. They have gone down in history as having failed. Those concerned have not become famous for their actions; they have become infamous.

As Shakespeare said—

"The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones."

The Premier, the Minister for Mines and Energy and the other 16 lackeys who have been party to the actions over the past month that have plunged this State—

Mr Casey: On the contrary, there won't be much good interred with their bones.

Mr VAUGHAN: There certainly will not.

During this entire episode the Minister for Mines and Energy has been conspicuous by his inactivity. As I have said publicly, he has been nothing more than an errand boy for the Premier, and the same could be said of the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester). They have sat in Cabinet and nodded their heads whenever the Premier has seen fit to move this State a step further along the road to anarchy.

As I have also said previously, this State will soon face a problem similar to that which exists in Northern Ireland. The Government must accept full responsibility for any reaction that this legislation causes.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr VAUGHAN: A Government member interjected, "All you can do is turn off the power." Government members should be well aware of what has happened in countries where a totalitarian authority has seen fit to try to force its will upon the people. I am also on record as saying that the memory of that infamous gentleman Mr Adolf Hitler will never be dead while the Premier is alive, and that is a fact.

The Government's intention in introducing this legislation is to crush the trade union movement. It has said, "We will embark upon a program which, as far as we are concerned, will crush the trade union movement." I assure Government members that the trade union movement has been in existence for a lot longer than has this Government, and that it will be in existence for a long time after the Premier has gone.

Let me look at the situation that has prevailed. We canvassed the position on Tuesday of last week when we debated the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer, and the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, concerning the electricity dispute.

Before 7 February, the Electrical Trades Union members employed by SEQEB had virtually been in dispute with SEQEB, which has existed since 1977 when the provisions of the Electricity Act came into existence. SEQEB was formed following an investigation of the State's power industry by a committee before 1977, which recommended that the whole industry be reorganised on the basis of seven distributing boards and one generating authority. Under that proposal the power stations that were formerly operated by regional boards and the Southern Electric Authority were amalgamated.

SEQEB was formed by an amalgamation of the Brisbane City Council electric authority and the Southern Electric Authority. When legislation was debated in 1976, considerable opposition was expressed to the taking over by the Government of the very efficient Brisbane City Council department of electricity. Despite the opposition of the people of Brisbane and those in south-east Queensland, the Government proceeded virtually to rob the people of south-east Queensland of the very efficient Brisbane City Council electric authority, and amalgamated it with the Southern Electric Authority. The two authorities became the SEQEB, which covered Queensland from Gympie to the southern border and as far west as Toowoomba.

When we debated the amendments to the Electricity Act last year I pointed out that all was not well in the electricity industry. On 26 August 1981, I attempted to get Parliament to take note of what was happening when I tried to get it to investigate the substantial increases in electricity charges throughout Queensland, particularly for domestic consumers. Prior to the reorganisation in 1977, the electricity bill for the average Brisbane domestic consumer was $44.34 a quarter. Following the most recent increase in tariffs on 16 June last year, the average electricity bill for the domestic consumer was $117.57

a quarter. Electricity charges since reorganisation of the industry in 1977 have increased 165 per cent for the average Brisbane domestic consumer.

That percentage increase is far in excess of the cost of living increases. Without doubt the Government must be concerned, but it believes in continuing to slug the people by way of electricity bills, despite the claim that Queensland is a low-tax State.

As the Opposition has pointed out in this Chamber on many occasions, Queensland is not a low-tax State. In actual fact, the Government has implemented a system of taxation by stealth. In addition to robbing or taxing by stealth the electricity consumers in this State through the medium of electricity tariffs, the Government has set out to take from electricity consumers a substantial amount of money in the form of a capital works levy.

This morning I asked the Minister for Mines and Energy a question about the finances of the South East Queensland Electricity Board over the last eight years since the reorganisation of the industry in 1977. In his answer he pointed out to me that the capital works levy has increased from about $11m in 1977 to $113m in 1983-1984. There is more to this matter than meets the eye.

The Government would have the people of Queensland believe that the only problems in the electricity industry in this State related to industrial relations. In August 1981, I tried to get the Government to do something about the electricity industry. I tried to get it to do something about the huge increases in electricity tariffs, industrial relations in the power industry and the organisational structure and management policies of the industry. My notice of motion remained on the Business Paper of this Assembly until the State election in 1983.

Subsequent to the election in 1983, there were indications that industrial relations in the power industry were improving. However, since then I have realised that they have deteriorated. Last Tuesday in this Chamber I pointed out that the history of industrial relations in the power industry in this State has never been good.

On a number of occasions Government members, particularily the Minister for Mines and Energy, have seen fit to refer to the fact that prior to my becoming a member of this Assembly I had had considerable experience in the electricity industry. Over a period of 13 years I was responsible for trying to negotiate with the power industry in Queensland to resolve industrial problems that occurred from time to time.

However, as I have indicated previously, that was not done without quite an amount of frustration. I instance an occasion involving call-out and stand-by duty. I was successful in convincing Commissioner Pont of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission that the industrial committee of the electricity industry was in fact stonewalling. It would not reply to correspondence for several months. Finally, Commissioner Pont ordered the whole industrial committee of the electricity industry, including the then Commissioner for Electricity (Mr Doug Murray), to appear before the commission. Mr Murray was very indignant about having to appear. Commissioner Pont proceeded to explain to the members of the committee the error of their ways and how necessary it was to try to negotiate to the best of their ability to settle problems in the electricity industry. He referred to the essential service nature of the industry. The electricity industry has not learnt from its mistakes.

In this instance, the dispute developed to the stage where widespread black-outs occurred throughout the length and breadth of the State. I have indicated previously that every industrial dispute involves two parties. There are two parties in this dispute. Let us look back and see what has happened in this dispute.

In February last year, the Government decided to appoint a new general manager of SEQEB following the removal from office or the movement sideways of the previous general manager. The Government installed a fellow with considerable experience in a number of industries that are outside government ambit. It is obvious that he was given specific instructions as to how he should proceed.

As was pointed out in the press last week by a former chairman of the Southern Electric Authority, Mr Ivan Dennis, since its formation, the management structure of SEQEB has resembled that of an inverted triangle, with the greater portion at the top and the lesser portion at the bottom. Obviously, since 1977, when the Government assumed control of the SEA from the Brisbane City Council and formed SEQEB, rationalisation has not taken place. With the appointment of a new general manager, the Government set about to try to force rationalisation at a very rapid rate. However, it did so at a very inopportune time.

In February last year, Mr Wayne Gilbert was appointed as general manager of SEQEB. That man has been associated with Carlton & United Breweries Ltd and with Coca Cola Bottlers Ltd, where he left a trail of devastation. He has also been associated with either the Tooths or the Tooheys breweries, and I am waiting for confirmation on that.

In about May of last year, SEQEB approached the Electrical Trades Union stating that it wanted to use contractors on certain work, and negotiations commenced. However, problems always occur when an employer approaches its workers and states that it wants to transfer work that they are performing to private enterprise.

Employees of SEQEB and those throughout the length and breadth of this State's power industry acknowledge that certain work must be performed by outside contractors. It is a fact that, virtually since the power industry came into existence, outside contractors have been employed. It is well known that the power stations in this State are constructed almost entirely by outside contract labour. As I mentioned last week in this place, it is well known that the high-voltage transmission lines that run across the State are constructed by outside contractors such as Electric Power Transmission Pty Ltd, ASCOM and Transfield (Qld) Pty Ltd.

Outside contractors, whenever they are employed by an electricity authority, must be supervised by personnel from within the industry. It has been my experience that a number of outside contractors have been required to go back over much of their work—sometimes at considerable expense to the electricity authority involved—to rectify faults in the work that they have performed. Much of the work has not been up to scratch, because electrical contractors do not always engage the correct classification of worker for the work that they are required to perform. This problem must be monitored very closely.

The question of safety is also important. I can recall that not too many years ago the union had many problems caused by high voltage transmission line contractors who were not employing workers of the correct classification and were not observing safety procedures and precautions that are commonly followed in the electricity industry by trained and skilled workers.

I return to the issue in question, that is, the engagement of contractors by SEQEB. I should state that one of the reasons that employees of SEQEB felt so concerned about the decision of SEQEB to engage outside contractors was that in August last year the new general manager, Mr Wayne Gilbert, circulated a document throughout the length and breadth of the board's area specifying the areas of work to be hived off, some to the Queensland Electricity Commission.

I should point out that at that time that commission was not in existence. Legislation to bring the Queensland Electricity Commission into being was not passed by the House until November last year, and the commission did not come into existence until 1 January this year. However, in August last year the general manager, Mr Wayne Gilbert, indicated that certain work had to be transferred to the Queensland Electricity Commission, other work was to be hived off to outside industry and certain other work was to be transferred to the Education Department. As I have already pointed out, apart from a number of other significant areas, one area of activity that was to be hived off was apprenticeship training.

Those actions caused concern to employees of SEQEB, who could see the writing on the wall. Although, initially, reference was made to certain construction work on concrete pole power lines, the workers generally accepted, from the contents of the document that was circulated by the general manager of SEQEB, that it was only a matter of time before there would be a move to extend the amount of work that was to be sent to outside contractors. The whole of the electricity industry of this State was aware that, although the initial move by the Government had been made within SEQEB, it was only a matter of time before whatever was achieved there would be transferred to the other six distribution boards throughout the State so that, ultimately, the State's power structure would be watered down and much of the work would be farmed out to private enterprise.

Last year, during debate on the Electricity Act Amendment Bill, I pointed out that I believed that the Government's ultimate intention was to take full control of the State's electricity industry. Last year the Government moved, through amendments to the Electricity Act, to formalise its take-over of the Queensland Electricity Generating Board, which was also formed in 1977. Honourable members will recall that, in about 1982, I think it was, the Government announced that it had abolished the Queensland Electricity Generating Board, and that the State Electricity Commission of Queensland would take over the operations of that board. That was the first step. However, it took the Government two years to draw up the legislation required to formalise that action. Obviously the Government did not take too long to draw up the legislation now before the House, which tries to make further inroads into the stability of the State's power industry.

As I have pointed out, the Government's ultimate intention is to place the Queensland Electricity Commission in complete control of the entire power industry and do away with the remaining distribution boards, that is, the South East Queensland Electricity Board, the Wide Bay-Burnett Electricity Board, the Capricornia Electricity Board, the Mackay Electricity Board, the North Queensland Electricity Board and the Far North Queensland Electricity Board.

I know that people in the northern part of the State are extremely concerned. At the time of the reorganisation of the industry, they were concerned about the future of the boards' operations in their areas, because the original proposal was for only four distribution boards in this State, compared with seven, which was finally agreed to. It could be well understood that workers who enjoy continuity of employment, and who are working for wages and conditions that have been won through negotiation and agreement over a number of years, would be concerned about their future welfare.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr VAUGHAN: Prior to the luncheon recess, I had referred to the concern that was created in the minds of the SEQEB employees following receipt of the document that was distributed to them by the new general manager of the South East Queensland Electricity Board (Mr Wayne Gilbert) in August last year. That concern, followed by a move by SEQEB to channel out certain power-line construction work to private contractors, led to the dispute that erupted on 7 February this year. The events that have taken place since that date are very important in a consideration of the Bill, which the Minister for Mines and Energy is attempting to rush through the House today.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated—

> " the purpose of this Bill is to translate into statute law the provisions of the Orders in Council made during the state of emergency "

It is necessary to refer to those Orders in Council and to the events since the proclamation of the state of emergency on Thursday, 7 February 1985.

As the Industrial Commission's order restraining the Electrical Trades Union and its members from taking part in any strike was issued by the State Industrial Commission at about 4 p.m. on Thursday, 7 February, the proclamation by the Government of a state of emergency on that date, Thursday, 7 February, and the issuing of the Orders in

Council on Friday, 8 February, and subsequent to that date were hasty and provocative actions. As the order provided that the union take all reasonable steps to advise its members employed by the South East Queensland Electricity Board of the order and its contents, one would have expected that some time would have been given for that to take place. However, it is apparent that the Government was intent on short-circuiting the provisions of Queensland's Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The Bill confirms that contention. It is now obvious that the Government had pre-planned the whole event and was determined to control the course of the dispute between the South East Queensland Electricity Board and the Electrical Trades Union.

As a strike was in progress, why did the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) not order a secret ballot, as is provided for under section 98 of the State Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act? After all, the Government and the Minister have always advocated the conducting of secret ballots and have amended the provisions of the Act to ensure that such ballots will be conducted in accordance with the wishes of the Government.

The Government has also purposely contended that the so-called union bosses were responsible for the dispute and had forced the SEQEB workers to take strike action. Such a contention is, of course, a blatant untruth, which a secret ballot would have clearly established.

As the "Hansard" record of the debate on Tuesday, 26 February 1985, will show, virtually every Government speaker, obviously under direction, ensured that the words "union bosses" were used repeatedly. Of course, under the provisions of section 98 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the Industrial Commission itself could have ordered the taking of a secret ballot. As I have also pointed out, if the order issued by the Industrial Commission at 4 p.m. on Thursday, 7 February, was not complied with, the South East Queensland Electricity Board could have proceeded against the union for a breach of the Act. Why did the Government not want that to be done? Why did the Government not want a secret ballot to be taken? Why did the Government have the Governor proclaim a state of emergency before the ink was dry on the Industrial Commission order? Why, before the union had time to consider the contents of the Industrial Commission order, did the Government have the Governor, via the Orders in Council, order the general manager of the South East Queensland Electricity Board to dismiss forthwith any person who did not return to work?

I believe that the answer to all of those questions is that the National Party Government of this State—or should it now be called the Nazi Party Government—had its eyes on the Rockhampton by-election of Saturday, 16 February, which was then only eight days away. It knew that the dismissal of any SEQEB employee would not assist in resolving the dispute but would, in fact, prevent any settlement and extend the dispute into other areas of the State's power industry.

The National Party political advisers, whom honourable members have seen in action on numerous previous occasions and who, I believe, have overseas associations, are very astute and cunning.

The Government knows from past experience that it can use—or should I say "misuse"—industrial disputation for political gain. Government members thought that if industrial action could be extended to Rockhampton the Government could use that state of affairs to its political advantage. During the week prior to the Rockhampton by-election, everyone saw the Government using public funds to launch a massive propaganda campaign in the press, on radio and on television throughout the State.

Mr McElligott: Who paid for that?

Mr VAUGHAN: The Government used public funds. Public money was squandered by the Government for political purposes.

On Sunday, 10 February 1985, a proposal to settle the dispute, which was acceptable to the South East Queensland Electricity Board, was rejected by the Government. On

Monday, 11 February 1985, the Government callously dismissed 1 500 efficient, skilled SEQEB workers without considering the ramifications. On Thursday, 14 February 1985, the dispute could have been settled if the Government had really wanted it resolved. Of course, at that time, the Rockhampton by-election was only one day away and the National Party's propaganda machine was in full swing. As usual, the Premier and Treasurer spent tens of thousands of dollars—perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars—of tax-payers' money on television, radio and newspaper advertising. Those advertisements saturated the whole State. That is typical of the propaganda machine operating in this State.

The people of Rockhampton soundly rejected the National Party and its tactics. However, unfortunately, the Government had burnt all its bridges and left itself no room to manoeuvre. In spite of the efforts of the State Industrial Commission, the mounting cost of the dispute to the State and the damage being done to the Brisbane and south-east Queensland distribution system, this irresponsible Government refused to remove the only barrier to settlement of the dispute—the reinstatement of the sacked SEQEB workers.

Government members are industrially naive if they believe that the terms proposed on Thursday, 21 February, would be acceptable to workers in a so-called free society. The Government and its political advisers knew that the terms put forward by the Government would be unpalatable and would be rejected by the power station operators and the sacked SEQEB workers.

The terms of the Government's proposal clearly illustrate the level of understanding of industrial relations possessed by the Government and, in particular, the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen), the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester), the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) and perhaps a few of the advisers of the Minister for Mines and Energy. Of course, the latter two Ministers have been no more than puppets of the Premier and Treasurer. They have shown their incompetence quite clearly.

Anyone with any knowledge of industrial relations—even the Queensland Confederation of Industry, which is obviously among the Government's industrial advisers—would have known that power station operators would not enter into any no-strike agreement without a trade-off, which could have been the subject of negotiation, and without a clear understanding that their fellow power workers in the South East Queensland Electricity Board would be reinstated under terms acceptable to the trade union movement.

The terms offered to the sacked SEQEB workers included one that they not be reinstated until 30 days after the power station operators agreed to a no-strike agreement. The terms also involved a reduction in working conditions. In addition, a number of sacked SEQEB workers would not be re-engaged. That happened after the Mount Isa dispute in 1964 and, of course, is totally unacceptable.

On Thursday, 21 February, the Premier and Treasurer, in his usual dictatorial way, indicated that there would be no compromise and that the terms offered by the Government were not negotiable. I repeat that the Premier and Treasurer has stated unequivocally that the terms offered by his Government were not negotiable. He has repeatedly spoken on radio and appeared on television throughout the length and breadth of this State saying that the Government would not compromise.

Is that any way to solve industrial disputes? Is that any way to conduct industrial relations?

If the Minister for Mines and Energy—the Minister in charge of the electricity industry in this State—continues to carry on in that way he is heading for more trouble. Although power station operators have restored full power, the dispute has not been resolved, and the State's whole electricity system is under substantial stress.

Obviously, the Government believes that the South East Queensland Electricity Board can operate indefinitely without the sacked workers, and only time will tell whether or not that belief is correct. Nevertheless, the Government should appreciate that the tide does turn.

As I said previously, by using the Governor to proclaim a state of emergency, the National Party Government in Queensland has abolished the authority of the Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. Statements made by the Premier and Treasurer and Cabinet Ministers make it apparent that the Government is intent on destroying the arbitration system. The Bill brought forward today proves that point. Rather than declaring a state of emergency and having Orders in Council issued, the Government should have proceeded according to the provisions of the State Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, which it bypassed. If the Government intends to destroy the State arbitration system, then so be it. However, the Government would be well advised to be certain it fully understands what the results of such an action would be.

Several Cabinet Ministers have indicated that a system of collective bargaining, such as that which operates in the United States and Canada, would be favoured by them. I wonder whether those honourable gentlemen know what they are doing.

Because the Government has demonstrated that it favours a contract system of industrial relations above the present system, it should be remembered that, in time, every contract has to be renegotiated. It should also be remembered that if mutual agreement cannot be reached, industrial relations can become rather messy.

Of course, the National Party Government would undoubtedly prefer to return to the old master-and-servant days, and, undoubtedly, it will attempt to convince the people of Queensland that the power dispute is responsible for Queensland's ailing economy. The Minister for Mines and Energy has already alleged that State taxes will rise as a result of the dispute. A Government that deliberately sets out to create industrial disputation to hide its incompetency and political expediency is a desperate Government indeed.

I am sure that the people of Queensland long ago learnt not to be shocked by anything that this National Party Government and the Premier and Treasurer would say or do. Many times before, the Government has attempted to bludgeon the people of this State into submission. In 1979, essential services legislation was introduced, despite the fact that the Opposition said that it was not the answer. Numerous amendments to the State Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act have also been made. Notwithstanding that, the Government will not face the fact that a bad industrial relations policy is the cause of the problems, particularly in the State electricity industry.

The legislation that is before the House today is a blot on the history of Government in this State. The Government will learn that it is not the answer. Whereas the general public disapproves of strikes, bans and limitations, Australians abhor totalitarian measures such as the Government has proposed in the Bill. As I said earlier, the days of master and servant have long since gone. It is time that the Premier and Treasurer and his fascist National Party Government realised that fact.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (2.28 p.m.): Legislation of the type that is presently before the House is necessary because of the callous disregard of some unions for the welfare of other people in Queensland. I instance the example of the recent power industry strike. Not only did the strike inflict serious hardship upon the entire community; it also caused irreparable damage to businesses and industry in Queensland, as well as to the economy as a whole. Estimates of loss are nearing the $1 billion mark and are expected to go higher as the full effects of the power strike are revealed.

The whole dispute boils down to no more than an extremely costly exercise in futility, because not only have union members lost wages and jobs but also many

businesses will not recover sufficiently to enable employees who have been stood down to be re-employed. It is about time that the members of trade unions realised what their activities are costing them and the nation as a whole.

Action by one of the two unions involved has affected the livelihood of more than half a million Queensland families, and I ask: What sort of comradeship is that? The Queensland Government is not prepared to allow that kind of unionism to ruin this great State. The community has a right to be protected from thuggery, particularly when the unions concerned have failed to abide by the rulings of the Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

Despite what certain newspaper reports and advertisements may have stated, the facts are that, prior to 17 February 1985, SEQEB and the Queensland Government had accepted all the recommendations made to them by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. I might add that the Electrical Trades Union, between 5 December and 17 February, rejected four recommendations and one order. One recommendation in particular, made on 10 February by Commissioner Birch and accepted in toto by the Government and SEQEB, was the turning point in the whole dispute. If the ETU had accepted that recommendation, the dispute would not have escalated to the extent that it did.

The recommendation actually had five parts. One was that members of the ETU lift all bans and return to their normal work. Three others referred to the Government and SEQEB, and recommended that all dismissal notices, and those pending, be withdrawn and that employees be reinstated without loss of benefit, and that the deregistration procedures against the union be discontinued. The fifth was that the parties meet five days later under the chairmanship of the commission to discuss further the four contracts at the centre of the dispute. However, the ETU rejected the five-part recommendation because, at the time, it could not obtain a firm undertaking from the Government regarding the four contracts. In other words, the unions wanted an undertaking prior to any meeting taking place, which was basically a win and place result.

The reason for the Bill is that the public of Queensland is not getting a fair deal from the unions. The electricity industry is an essential industry and people have a right to power at any time they need it. The Government believes that this legislation is absolutely necessary, because, recently, enormous industrial turmoil has been witnessed right throughout the nation.

Only recently the Japanese Prime Minister was in Australia and attempts were being made to sell more coal and other products to Japan. Train-drivers in New South Wales refused to haul coal from the Hunter Valley to Newcastle. What sort of comradeship is that? They were endeavouring to destroy the job opportunities of a great many people, and did untold damage to Australia.

The builders labourers are another example of people creating mindless disruption. After they had succeeded in persuading employers to pay $11 per week per person into a superannuation fund—the employers paid all the contributions—they said that there would be peace for ever but, since then, they have caused an enormous amount of disruption.

The Federal Public Service dispute also springs to mind. It has been going on for a long time. The Federal Government has done everything possible to appease the unions—it has seemingly done the right thing—but, although there is a temporary reprieve, the dispute is far from over.

Reference has been made to the rights of unions and union members. I want to know, other members want to know and Queenslanders want to know: What about the rights of innocent people who are affected by union action? What about those people who want to work, uninhibited by anyone else? What about the 300 ladies at the TAB—many of them supporting mothers—who, because of union action, found that they were

without income. I refer, of course, to the action of the Telecom unions, run—if the Labor Party wants to get into the act—by the president of the ALP.

During the dispute, reference was made to trade-offs for certain work. What about the ordinary person doing an ordinary job such as serving behind a counter? He does not get a trade-off. Why should those workers involved in the dispute get trade-offs? After all, their role is to work and to do all those things necessary to make our State a bigger, better and more stable place for everybody to live.

Mr McLEAN (Bulimba) (2.34 p.m.): I welcomed the chance to listen to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) because it is very strange to hear from him. I certainly did not hear from him during the recent dispute. He has not contributed much of value to the debate today, particularly when one considers that he read a prepared speech.

Mr Hamill: They call him "The Invisible Man"

Mr McLEAN: Exactly.

If the Minister were honest, he would resign because of his handling of this dispute. He is not living up to, or carrying out, the duties conferred on him as Minister in charge of industrial relations.

The way in which the measure was introduced is typical of the Government's sledge-hammer mentality, and typical of democracy as it is practised by the Government in Queensland. It is the most repressive, inflammatory and destabilising legislation to come before any Parliament in Australia, particularly in the light of the situation in the power industry in Queensland. It is certainly ill-conceived and unworkable legislation introduced at a time when it can only create more problems for the people of Queensland.

Taking into account its efforts in industrial relations since it became the governing party in Queensland, the National Party's industrial relations policy demonstrates the hypocrisy of that party.

Mr McElligott: Is that the one in which they use swastikas instead of asterisks?

Mr McLEAN: If they do not do so, they should.

I will now read several paragraphs from the National Party's industrial relations policy, in these terms—

> "Encouragement of Industrial Harmony
>
> The National Party stands for the belief that sound relationships between employers and employees established upon mutual trust and integrity are essential to successful national development.
>
> The growth of understanding and co-operation in the workplace, by the encouragement of a continuing exchange of information between employees and employers with the aim of improving the job satisfaction productivity and working environment of the individual and to promote more harmonious industrial relations.
>
> Encouragement of regular discussions between representatives of employees' and employers' organisations designed to further an understanding of their common interests and problems and to provide a forum on manpower and industrial matters generally."

If that is not hypocrisy, I do not know what hypocrisy is.

Later, the policy continues—

> "The belief that it is contrary to the interests of employees, employers and the community for strikes and lock-outs to be tolerated before negotiations and conciliation have proceeded as far as possible without satisfaction and that strikes and lock-outs should not be tolerated after the relevant Industrial Tribunal has delivered an arbitrated decision upon the matter in dispute."

That most certainly has not happened in this instance.

The Minister, in his speech, laid the blame completely on the workers and totally exonerated the Government.

Mr Vaughan: The Government engineered the whole thing.

Mr McLEAN: Of course it did.

It is obvious to anyone who followed the dispute that it was not initiated in the past few weeks. Indeed, it has been under way for the past few years. The Government has been following a master plan. I will refer to that a little later.

The Minister, in his speech, referred to the no-strike provision that we have read about so often in the press. I should inform the Minister that it is contrary to all ILO conventions. It is certainly contrary to the thinking of all free persons in all free countries throughout the world.

Mr I. J. Gibbs: What about your mates in Russia?

Mr McLEAN: Members of the Opposition are beginning to believe that they are in Russia.

An ILO publication on international labour standards states—

> " contrary to what people sometimes believe there is no provision in any Labour Convention or Recommendation specifically recognising the 'right to strike' or defining the extent to which it may be exercised."

However, Article 8, 1 (d) of the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights specifically includes—

> "The 'right to strike' provided that it is exercised in conformity with the laws of the particular country."

This legislation is certainly in breach of accepted ILO conventions.

Further on, the publication states that the right to strike could be supported by a common law principle if workers felt that their working environment was unsafe or hazardous and injurious to their health. At no time have I heard the Minister speak about workers' safety. I suppose he believes that workers have no rights in that matter.

This Bill will not work. This is not the first occasion on which the Queensland Government has used nineteenth century legislation to try to drive workers back to work. It has been tried in many other countries, and it will be tried again. It has not worked yet in any free country, and it will not work in Queensland. It has been proved that Governments cannot legislate to obtain industrial harmony. The only way in which industrial harmony will be achieved is by negotiation, consultation and understanding between workers and employers.

This legislation is an obvious follow-up to an unpopular decision by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission that union members should be given preference in jobs. It shows the weakness of the National Party Government. Shortly after that decision was given, on 12 August 1984, an article headed "Sir Joh won't 'buy' union ruling" appeared in the press. I think that it puts this whole sorry mess in a nutshell. It states—

> "State Cabinet will be called into emergency session tomorrow to decide how to challenge the State Industrial Commission's approval of compulsory unionism.
>
> The Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, said last night from his Kingaroy home that he was opposed to the commission's decision.
>
> On Friday, the commission's Full Bench ruled that union members should be given preference for jobs, in the state public service, over non-union members and that non-union members should be the first retrenched.

'We (the Cabinet) will be meeting first thing on Monday; every area will be looked at to see what can be done,' the Premier said.

'I just do not know what the court's idea is. The point is, does a court have the right to determine a government's policy? I can only say that I see it as not having that right.

I have never heard of any court telling a government what its policy should be.

The policy of the Queensland Government is, and has been, that there is no necessity for compulsory unionism . a policy that is backed up by the people of Queensland. They are sick to death of unions and their strikes and threats. We will not be accepting this decision.' "

That is the man who fought his whole campaign against the SEQEB workers on the ground that they disobeyed and would not accept a commission ruling. He stated quite clearly, "We will not be accepting the decision of the Industrial Commission." This Bill is designed to carry out that intention.

By this legislation, it is obvious that the Premier and Treasurer is trying to weaken the standing of the commission. He wants to destroy the trade union movement and he is not concerned about the cost to the community.

The history of the power dispute points out some interesting facts that have not been mentioned by Government members. At the centre of the dispute is the Government's plan to award work in the electricity industry to private contractors. The honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) mentioned that matter. It has a history, not of three or four weeks, but of three or four years. The inevitable consequence of the transfer of this work to private enterprise will be a reduction in the number of full-time permanent electricity employees and a loss of working conditions.

The Government has a belligerent industrial relations policy that involves a perversion of industrial justice, and unionists are bludgeoned with dismissals, loss of benefits and threats to their livelihood. The usual industrial laws and practices have been overridden by a state of emergency, which gives the Premier and Treasurer absolute power to sack workers and to employ replacements on below-award working conditions. This Bill is a continuation of the Government's policy and will only worsen the situation.

In May 1984 SEQEB advised the ETU that it wished to negotiate an agreement on the use of contractors. ETU representatives met with SEQEB management. Because the ETU State council was not satisfied that SEQEB could maintain adequate manning levels, it found the agreement unacceptable, and in August 1984 it was rejected. SEQEB's argument is that because its full-time permanent employees are not fully occupied in the slack period, contract labour should be employed. However, full-time permanent manning levels are below those that are needed in the industry. Although the union raised that point, it was not given a fair hearing.

SEQEB would like to use contract labour to do the work that should be performed by full-time, permanent employees. The long-term effects of such a policy are that job opportunities in the electricity industry will be lost, as will many current, permanent positions.

On 17 January 1985, ETU members were again instructed to perform work on the banned projects, which they refused to do. As a result, ETU members went on strike. On 18 January, when a severe storm hit Brisbane, the Industrial Commission ordered the ETU members back to work. The ETU members obeyed that order and they continued to work until later in the month. I am sure that all honourable members remember the fine job that those men performed under those very trying conditions. However, the Minister continued to make attacks upon the union officials.

On 22 January 1985, the parties were required to meet in the State Industrial Commission. As a result of that conference it was recommended that SEQEB and ETU officials talk on manning levels. The talks proved fruitless. On 25 January, SEQEB shop

stewards met and decided to apply overtime bans. On 26 January, ETU members refused to restore power. As a result, SEQEB supervisors were used to partially restore power and, in response, members of the ETU at Beenleigh went on strike. On 7 February, the commission ordered the men back to work but, because of unsuccessful negotiations following previous returns to work, ETU members refused to accept the order.

On 8 February, the Governor in Council proclaimed a state of emergency under the provisions of the State Transport Act. The striking workers were ordered back to work and the Electricity Commission was empowered to take whatever action was necessary to maintain supply. As a result of an Industrial Commission conference on 10 February between SEQEB and the ETU, a five-point recommendation was issued. The ETU offered to compromise its original position on the four contract jobs. However, the Government rejected the compromise of the ETU and the Industrial Commission's five-point recommendation. The facts are clear; the Goverment prolonged the dispute well beyond the stage at which it could have been settled.

On 11 February, 940 striking workers who refused to report to work were dismissed. On 12 February, a mass meeting of ETU members employed by SEQEB decided to accept the recommendation of the Industrial Commission. That afternoon, the commission called a conference at which the ETU recorded the acceptance by its members of the commission's recommendations. Because the ETU members were sacked, power station operators reduced output, and load-shedding commenced. On 13 February, the Trades and Labor Council requested a meeting with the Premier and Treasurer, who refused its request. The TLC then spoke to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, who conveyed the message to the Premier in a fashion that was typical of his actions during the dispute.

Mr McElligott: He fixed the lifts, though.

Mr McLEAN: Yes, probably the Minister did fix the the lifts for him at the same time.

The Government again refused to accept the commission's five-point recommendation. That means that during the period of the major problems of the power dispute when the electricity output was reduced, the Government twice refused to accept the commission's five-point recommendation, which was acceptable to the unions.

On 14 February union delegates met to report on the outcome of commission conferences and the Government's rejection of recommendations. On the same date the Government announced that power house operators would be fined for disobeying directives issued under the state of emergency.

On 15 February the Trades and Labor Council approached the President of the Industrial Court and asked him to intervene. To that stage the unions had tried every avenue to get the Government to come to the party, to see reason and to sit down and talk about the problem. Once again the Government refused.

From that day-by-day history of the facts of the dispute, it is obvious that the Government was not interested at any stage in a settlement of the dispute. Regardless of the second-reading speech of the Minister for Mines and Energy, the whole sorry mess of this dispute falls back onto the Government.

Regardless of the lifting of the state of emergency, the provisions of the Bill make the previous dismissals of SEQEB workers lawful. The Bill also provides for the signing of contracts by employees. The contracts do not contain a wages provision; in fact, I have been told that there will be a reduction in wages and working conditions. The former 34¼-hour week will become a 38-hour week and a 7¼-hour day will become a 7¾-hour day. Of course, the contracts contain a no-strike clause.

The Bill prevents the Industrial Commission from directing the reinstatement or re-employment of the sacked workers after the state of emergency has been lifted. The Bill provides the commissioner, whoever he may be, with unfettered power.

It is already common knowledge that the appointment of the commissioner will be another case of jobs for the boys. The Opposition has been told that a very close friend of the Minister for Mines and Energy—quite possibly a neighbour—will receive the appointment. The Opposition feels that that is another example of the contempt with which the Government treats the people of Queensland. Under a democratic system of government, no one man should have these far-reaching powers, which will cause chaos, disputation, confrontation and instability within the power industry. In the opinion of the Opposition, the provisions of the Bill will achieve exactly the opposite of what the Government has set out to achieve. The Bill will not destroy the trade union movement in this State; it will strengthen it. From the trade union movement the Government will find a reaction that it has not anticipated.

The Bill provides for fines of $1,000 and dismissals, which will rest on the decisions of one man, the commissioner, regardless of the provisions of any award. I put it to the Minister that that will return industrial relations in Queensland to the law of the jungle.

With his damaging and provocative statements throughout the dispute, the Premier and Treasurer has blatantly inflamed the dispute and inflicted much unnecessary worry and suffering onto the people of Queensland.

I am disappointed that the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) has not been prepared to defend his commission in any way or to fulfil his role, which is one of a conciliatory nature. He should ease the burden of industrial problems on the people of Queensland, not create them.

Mr Innes: Don't you fellows on that side see any fault whatsoever on the part of the unions?

Mr McLEAN: Of course there is fault. To a point, there is always fault on both sides. But those faults cannot be aired unless people can sensibly and constructively sit round a table and talk about them.

The Government's attitude will not work. One cannot expect to hit a person over the head with a sledge-hammer without some reaction.

The state of emergency should never have been declared in the first place. This legislation is a blatant attempt by the Premier and Treasurer to satisfy the obsessive hatred that he has had for the trade union movement.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I remind honourable members that I will not tolerate conversations across the Chamber other than the direct reply to an interjection by the member who is speaking.

Mr McLEAN: The Premier and Treasurer's obsession to destroy trade unions in this State regardless of the cost has resulted in the industrial turmoil that exists. Queenlanders will soon feel the cost of the problems and will be paying very dearly for his wild extravagances to satisfy the obsession that he has had for a long time.

The state of emergency has already caused untold damage in financial terms and caused personal pain and suffering. It is now quite obvious that Queensland will be thrown into a further unstable situation that, in the long term, will be even more costly to the people of Queensland.

Queensland is sitting on an industrial powder-keg. This situation is not helped by the Government's irresponsible attitude in regard to industrial relations. It is all very well for the Premier and Treasurer to claim that he has won the fight and, of course, to try to attain his long-term dream of a union-free society; but industry cannot operate in that manner. For industry to prosper and grow, Governments must provide stability and leadership to allow sensible planning of future development. That cannot be achieved with constant agitation between the Government and the work-force.

A stable and reliable work-force can result only from a constructive and sensible approach to industrial relations. The day of treating workers as slaves has long gone,

and unless some sane and constructive negotiations are entered into, industry in this State will take many years to recover.

One of the points that have not been brought out in the debate from the commencement of the dispute is that the Government, and more particularly the Premier and Treasurer, has acted as prosecutor, judge and jury. The appropriate body, which is the Industrial Concilation and Arbitration Commission, should have had and should still have the responsibility of settlement of this dispute. The workers in the dispute were not given an opportunity of a fair hearing. The dispute was instigated by the Premier and Treasurer after the Government had done everything in its power from the day it began. He, together with his chief adviser, Mr Siebenhausen, must take full responsibility for the dispute. Mr Siebenhausen, the National Party member who has been the main spokesman for industry in this State, should have acted more responsibly. He, too, acted in a most irresponsible manner by making inflammatory statements.

The Premier and Treasurer intentionally short-circuited the only logical means of settlement of this dispute and must carry the blame for the whole mess. His dreams are about to be fulfilled to a point. By his hatred, his bitterness and his ability to create conflict and division within the community, a divided society and class division within Queensland is one step closer to becoming a reality instead of just a dream that he has had for many years. All Queenslanders have suffered and are suffering enormously by way of financial loss, physical pain and suffering. That, of course, is of no consequence to the Premier and Treasurer.

By declaring a state of emergency and being the instigator of this Bill, the Premier and Treasurer effectively maintained the role of prosecutor, judge and jury in this State. The provisions of the Bill will be controlled completely by the Government. The appointment of an Electricity Commissioner will be a political one. If what I have said is not true and if it is not a friend of the Minister for Mines and Energy who gets the job, nevertheless it will be a Government appointment. The Electricity Commissioner will be at the beck and call of the Premier and Treasurer and will have to bow to his every whim. The Premier and Treasurer will retain the role of prosecutor, judge and jury in an industry that is destined to suffer turmoil for many years to come.

I go back to the issue I touched on previously, that is, that the workers themselves are not receiving a fair go. They were not given the opportunity to have their grievances and concerns aired by way of the usual industrial relations dispute-handling procedure. The Government stands condemned for that. Even murderers are given a fair trial and are convicted only after the due process of the law. Under Bjelke-Petersen's law, that opportunity is not given to workers. That is a slur on this Government.

The Premier and Treasurer may win on this issue after his obsessive struggle. I do not think that he will, but he may. I guarantee that he will be remembered as the person who introduced violence and hatred into the Australian way of life. He will be remembered as the person who destroyed the wonderful way of life in this country. He will be remembered as the man who advocated and had violence accepted as part of the way of life in this country. He will be remembered long after his death with disgust. The Premier and Treasurer, with his animal cunning and his animal principles, supported by a weak Cabinet made up of yes-men, incompetents and fellow-fascists, will long be remembered.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (3.2 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the general thrust of the legislation. I am sure that the community supports a Bill that endeavours to guarantee continuity of electricity supply. The Parliament is expected to do something about the current situation. In recent years interruption to electricity supply has been endured by the community. On occasions that interruption to electricity supply has been as a result of frivolous disputes. Frivolous withdrawal of labour cannot be tolerated by the community. The Government is wise to introduce the legislation.

Nevertheless, when legislation is put before the Parliament for examination, honourable members have a responsibility to ensure that it is as perfect as it can be. The

legislation does contain a few defects which require remedying. I will bring them to the notice of the Minister——

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I point out to the honourable member for South Brisbane that the Chair is here, not up in the gallery. If the honourable member keeps talking like that, I will put him out. He will come to order.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I make these suggestions in the hope that the legislation will be improved. I hope that the Minister does something about them. It seems to me that part of this legislation has been hastily drafted, because there are omissions and a few defects which should be brought to attention.

It would have been helpful if the Bill regarding the establishment of a tribunal to cover industrial disputes in the electricity industry was also on the table. I understand that complications have arisen in its preparation. However, the complementary nature of that legislation would probably solve a few of the problems that I will raise. Unfortunately, the provisions of that Bill are not presently before the House, and honourable members have to consider the legislation that is in front of them.

In the first instance, I draw to the attention of the Minister a provision in the Bill that gives unprecedented power to the Electricity Commissioner. In the past, no public servant or officer of a statutory authority has enjoyed the power that it is proposed to give the Electricity Commissioner under the provisions of this Bill. Although it is true that the Commissioner for Railways has enormous powers under disciplinary provisions, some of which are very heavy indeed, it should be remembered that those provisions have operated as part of the Railways Act for many years and have been retained. Because the railways have been regarded as an essential service, and decisions that must be made under extreme circumstances should be made promptly, some of the provisions to which I refer were recently reinforced in the House by further amendments to the Railways Act. In order to provide that essential service and to ensure the safety of railway passengers and employees, the authority of the Commissioner for Railways must be without question and complete.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Why don't you say something constructive?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am endeavouring to describe the background to the authority that has been given to certain officers of the Crown, and the Commissioner for Railways happens to be one of the people to whom I have referred.

Under the provisions of the Bill, the Electricity Commissioner will be given authority to give directions to people who are not his employees and are not the employees of subcontractors who have dealings with electricity authorities.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What is new?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I ask the honourable member for Wolston whether he will support the issuing by a Crown officer of a civil direction and a civil conscription, such as is provided for under the terms of the legislation. Liberal Party members do not support those provisions.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What does the Liberal Party stand for?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Liberal Party members know where the honourable member for Wolston stands. He is in favour of anarchy. Liberal Party members know that he supports his mates at Trades Hall, and that Trades Hall officials are his masters. He cannot say anything in this House without referring first to Trades Hall officials. Even the Lord Mayor of Brisbane (Alderman Roy Harvey) recently said that he has to refer to his masters to ascertain what ALP policy is before it can be announced.

As I said previously, the Bill provides for the Electricity Commissioner to direct people other than people who are his employees or who are employed on a subcontract basis by electricity authorities. This provision of the Bill cannot be accepted by Liberal Party members, and I am sure that, when the Minister's attention has been drawn to it, the Government also will find it difficult to accept the provision. I presume that the Bill has been through the Government party-room.

Mr Innes: A dangerous presumption.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Whatever previous steps have been taken, it is nevertheless important to ensure that legislation is not passed that gives the power of civil conscription and total discretion to any public servant or Crown employee. In saying that, I refer to the terms of clause 3.

Liberal Party members support the power given to the Electricity Commissioner to deal with employees and contractors within the contract terms that govern work that is to be undertaken. However, the Bill contains no provision that allows for agents of the commissioner to be appointed. In other words, people who previously exercised authority over the generation and distribution of electricity supply would appear to have lost that authority, which has now been transferred to the Electricity Commissioner in every case. A drag-net clause should have been included to refer to appointed agencies of the commissioner. In every particular circumstance, it would not be possible for the commissioner to personally give directions, especially in emergency cases that arise thousands of miles from where the commissioner is located. A deficiency or absence of agents of the commissioner exists, and I draw that to the attention of the Minister.

Moreover, no provision is contained in the Bill to give a right of appeal against dismissal. One can easily imagine circumstances in which a person could be given a direction that, because of circumstances beyond the person's control or because of safety conditions that must be upheld, cannot be complied with, thereby making the work to be carried out an impossible task. This Bill contains no provision for a right of appeal against summary dismissal by the Electricity Commissioner. All members should support the concept of natural justice in regard to rights of appeal.

Mr Vaughan: You are not saying that there is natural justice in Queensland, are you?

Mr Innes: There's no natural justice in the unions; that's for sure.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Bullying and thuggery are the way members opposite deal with problems. They are the sort of people who support dictatorial legislation.

As I said, the Bill contains a provision for summary dismissal but not for a right of appeal. There is also a provision—when I first saw it I thought it was a printing error—that with dismissal goes an automatic penalty of up to $1,000. Most legislation contains a provision for dismissal or a fine, but not dismissal and a fine. As is mentioned in the Bill, that fine will be imposed by a magistrate. Yet there is no provision in the Bill as to who will lay the charge—whether it will be a policeman or an officer of the Electricity Commissioner.

Although the Bill contains a provision for a new term of employment for those who have defied the order of the Industrial Commission, it contains no provision for those who did comply with the Industrial Commission's order or for those who did not go on strike, and I believe that there were some. The provision covers only those who went on strike. That is a deficiency which could lead to people working side by side under entirely different conditions, and that will lead to industrial friction.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Opposition members have not picked up those deficiencies, they have not done anything about them and they have not found fault with the

legislation. They are just doing what their masters say they should do. They have no idea what it is all about.

Mr Innes: They have some masters of the ETU here now.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Those fellows in the ETU are not so masterful now.

I bring those deficiencies to the attention of the Minister because they make the legislation imperfect.

Every citizen in the community, no matter what his circumstances, has the right to be heard, and the employees of the electricity authorities should have that right.

The situation still remains that the position of the leaders of the unions involved in the power dispute has not been dealt with. They are the people who misdirected their members not to obey the order of the Industrial Commission. They are the people who have gone to water in this dispute because they know full well that, in the original dispute, the people employed by the private contractors were also members of the ETU employed under award conditions.

Mr Innes: They might have gone to water, but they left their men high and dry.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: They left their men right out in no man's land.

I say to the Government that it is still not too late to have a strike-ban clause inserted in the award, because, if that is defied by the union organisers, secretaries or bosses, they are the people who can be fined. They are the people who can be gaoled if they do not pay their fines.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It has been done before by a Labor Government, and without any trouble at all.

Those irresponsible people are still advocating strikes, discord, go-slows and work to regulation. They are absolutely untouched in this dispute while their members languish for lack of correct direction by their leaders. That is the situation in which the members finds themselves, and that is why the people are standing outside Parliament House today to look after their interests. No-one else is doing that. Opposition members are not looking after their interests. They have not raised a finger to help the people who have been put in that position. Did Opposition members recommend that they go back to work? Not a voice was raised in the ALP recommending that they return to work.

Mr De Lacy: Did you?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Yes, I did—on many occasions—but there was not a word from the members of the ALP to try to get those men back to work. As far as Opposition members were concerned, they could wither on the vine.

During the Committee stage, the Liberal Party intends to move amendments to improve the legislation and make it effective. My fear is that the voids created by the matters I have raised will cause the legislation to fail.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (3.17 p.m.): If the member for Nundah, the Leader of the six-pack, made one truthful statement, it was that the legislation was conceived very hurriedly. I have no doubt that it will join the long list of completely unworkable industrial laws that the honourable member for Nundah assisted through this Parliament when he was a member of the coalition Government.

In case there is any doubt in the minds of National Party members who have been subjected to certain pressures and given the Premier and his gang of faceless Ministers full support in the current dispute, I place on record that some of the men who are being subjected to the National Party vendetta, and being painted by the Premier as

lawless thugs, have participated in only one dispute in their lifetime in the industry, and that is the current dispute. Other members have been involved in two disputes, the other one being the dispute in which the Premier finally agreed to reduce hours. The majority of the workers have been involved in no more than two disputes in their working lives. It should be made clear that they are not the industrial thugs that the Premier and some of his ministerial collegues would have us believe them to be.

When the Opposition spokesman on Employment and Industrial Affairs commented on what he thought the Premier's position was in this matter, some fierce interjections were made by National Party backbenchers. They might care to note what was said by the President of the Industrial Court (Mr Justice Matthews), who called a special sitting of that court at 2.15 this afternoon to make a statement on the current electricity dispute. To my knowledge, it is only the second occasion on which the President of the Industrial Court has officially reprimanded the Queensland Government and, especially, the Premier of Queensland. If my memory serves me correctly, some rather disparaging remarks were made by the Premier and other representatives of the Government concerning actions taken by Commissioner Pont.

This afternoon Mr Justice Matthews said that the Premier and Treasurer had made disparaging remarks about the arbitration commission, and he made special reference to what the Premier said on recent television programs. That was when the Premier claimed that the commission always gives the unions what they want. Today, Mr Justice Matthews said that that comment by the Premier was absurd.

He also said that, in 1984, almost all of the 350 disputes that came before the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission were settled to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. Today, Mr Justice Matthews made the point that, since this Government's rationalisation program began in 1976, almost all of the industrial problems have been resolved by negotiation between the parties. Mr Justice Matthews said that he was reluctant to hold the sitting today but did so because of the attacks that have been made, no doubt by the Premier and Treasurer of this State, on the integrity of the arbitration commission.

Maybe Government members will not believe the Opposition when it says that the Premier and Treasurer has purposely set about to cause hatred and division in our society; maybe they will not believe the Opposition when it talks about the divisiveness and the complete breakdown in industrial relations; but perhaps—just perhaps—they will believe the President of the Industrial Court of Queensland when, this afternoon, he called a special sitting to castigate the Premier over his actions in the current industrial dispute.

The Bill is a disgrace to the Queensland Parliament and to this State. It is a disgusting piece of legislation in a number of aspects. This type of draconian legislation should be despised by any thinking parliamentarian. As the member for Bulimba (Mr McLean) said, it will not contribute in any way towards achieving peace in industry. Any Government member who believes the Minister for Mines and Energy and the Premier and Treasurer when they say that this legislation will bring about peace in industry is, quite frankly, not right in the head and not thinking with Queensland in mind. This type of draconian legislation will destroy the very things that most members of the industrial relations community in our State have striven to achieve within our democratic system.

Mr Innes: The ETU would know more about that than most people.

Mr WARBURTON: I wish to say, in reply to the constant interjections by the honourable member for Sherwood, that, over a long period, one of the problems facing lawyers is that they have not been able to poke their noses into the arena of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. They have tried because they see it as giving them a very lucrative existence. Fortunately, for the sake of the workers and the employers in this State, the Industrial Commission has remained a layman's court. The honourable

member for Sherwood engages in constant prattle and interjections simply because he is completely frustrated at not being able to earn a fortune from trying to overcome the industrial problems facing people.

The honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) was correct in his criticism of the Bill generally. One of the unfortunate matters in having very important legislation, as draconian as this legislation may be, rammed through this Assembly is that sufficient time will not be available to properly debate the clauses.

Clause 3 gives the Electricity Commissioner immense authority. It institutionalises the situation, and that can only create bitterness and confrontation. The provision goes much further than was suggested by the honourable member for Nundah. It entrenches in this State a permanent state of emergency; it gives dictatorial powers to the Government, which have yet to be interpreted in full.

I read from an Order in Council published on 12 February 1985 as follows—

> "And whereas by Order in Council made on the eighth day of February, 1985 it was ordered, directed and prescribed that the Electricity Commissioner, appointed under the Electricity Act 1976-1984, take whatever steps he considers are necessary to have work performed to restore and maintain the supply of electricity, including directing any person, whether or not an employee of the Queensland Electricity Commission or the South East Queensland Electricity Board, who is, in his opinion, capable of carrying out such work to so restore and maintain that supply."

I suggest that a reading of clause 3 (b) would bring any sensible person to the conclusion that it was taken directly from the Order in Council proclaiming the state of emergency. In other words, although the state of emergency will be lifted on Thursday, the provision in this Bill firmly entrenches state of emergency provisions in legislation of this State. That is to be despised, and the Government's intention can only be described as draconian. I hope that the public understands the implications on this State of such legislation.

To my knowledge, this is the first time that legislation has been introduced to implement provisions that should appear in awards of the State Industrial Commission. This legislation actually increases, within the electricity industry, the working hours of employees. That has never happened before.

The Opposition has been suspicious of the Premier's actions during the state of emergency. As I have said consistently throughout this dispute, foremost in the Premier's mind has been his desire to diminish the jurisdiction of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, which has stood firmly behind the workers and employers of this State for over 50 years. Nothing has been heard about this from the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs. He has given his commissioners and the Industrial Court no protection. Today the president of the Industrial Court (Mr Justice Matthews) had some rather nasty words to say about comments by the Premier, which have been supported by the Minister and his Cabinet colleagues.

As a result of the SEQEB dispute, this legislation will not only reduce the power of the Industrial Commission to order people to return to work, but it will also denude the commission completely of authority to make recommendations. The point comes across very loud and clear. The objective of the Premier and Treasurer and the Government has been to ensure that the jurisdiction of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was diminished so that it could not carry out its responsibilities under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The Government, led by the Premier and his faceless Cabinet, has quite deliberately set about to establish its own structure, through legislation, to take over the running of industrial relations in Queensland. That is a very sad state of affairs. Even more sadly, industry in this State has been conspicuous by its silence on this matter. More importantly, those in management within the electricity industry have become absolutely subservient to the whims of the Premier and his National Party stooges.

One of the unfortunate things about this place is that we as members of Parliament are not allowed to debate properly issues as important as this. With the full support of the National Party, which met this morning, and irrespective of the importance of the matters that are raised—including those matters raised by the honourable member for Nundah, who quite correctly stated that the provisions need amending before they pass through the House—the Minister for Mines and Energy came into the House earlier today and stated that at a quarter to 5 this afternoon the debate will end. There is only one reason for the Government's doing that—it wants to get this legislation onto the statute-book before the state of emergency expires on Thursday. Obviously the Government does not want the appropriate forum, the Industrial Commission, to have any control over the problems facing the SEQEB workers.

I simply want to repeat that it does not matter where any member stands in respect of the dispute, whether or not he supports strikes generally or whether he thinks it is the right of another person to withdraw his labour, because at this stage all of those things are irrelevant. Support for this legislation is support for what the Premier and Treasurer said he wanted to do some weeks ago—to make men and their families suffer. The stage has now been reached at which those 1 000 dismissed workers are the meat in the sandwich. By supporting this legislation, honourable members will be aiding and abetting the Premier and Treasurer in his vendetta against those men and their families.

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (3.32 p.m.): Contrary to what the Opposition has been saying, the Bill is certainly not extreme, nor is it outrageous in any way. In fact, on the contrary, it is a very sensible, desirable piece of legislation, which is quite mild. The leader of the Liberal Party referred to supposed deficiencies. Those supposed deficiencies are a matter for judgment and the leader of the Liberal Party is entitled to his opinion. However, as members realise, it is the Government that makes the decisions; it is the Government that arrives at judgments. If there are deficiencies, those are a matter for judgment.

Throughout the recent dispute, public reaction has clearly and consistently shown that the people of Queensland have had enough of disruption in the power industry and support the Government's strong action in dismissing the strikers after they refused to obey orders of the Industrial Commission. It is the Government's unshakeable view that, when the striking SEQEB workers refused to obey the order by the Industrial Commission that they return to work, they forfeited their rights to jobs which they held on privileged terms. The Leader of the Opposition cannot deny that the terms and conditions of those jobs were indeed privileged and that privileges were granted to those workers in exchange for an undertaking that they would not disrupt the power supplies in the way in which they previously had done so.

The Bill simply preserves the status quo by continuing the effectiveness of the action taken by SEQEB under the Order in Council of 8 February, including contracts of employment made by SEQEB during the state of emergency. It continues the authority that exists under the state of emergency for SEQEB to make contracts providing for a 38-hour week, a no-strike clause and the abolition of preference in favour of the Electrical Trades Union. As I have said, the Bill preserves the status quo in these respects and provides in this essential service for a no-strike provision which has the overwhelming support of the people of Queensland.

I turn now to another important provision, namely the clause concerning limitation of the Industrial Commission's jurisdiction. This clause achieves—I emphasise that—three things. One is that the Industrial Commission will not be able to order, recommend or suggest that the dismissed employees be reinstated or re-employed.

Mr Warburton: Shameful, isn't it?

Mr HARPER: For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, I will repeat what I said. The clause achieves three things.

I have already outlined one matter. Secondly, the clause preserves the Electricity Commissioner's authority to have work done by suitably qualified people to provide, maintain or restore a supply of electricity. Finally, the Industrial Commission will not be able to interfere with terms and conditions of employment authorised under this Bill. The Government's view is that each of these provisions is appropriate if the prevention of disruption in the electricity industry is to be achieved.

Make no mistake about it, the Bjelke-Petersen Government is determined to achieve that result! The unions made a very poor assessment. Once again, they showed that they completely misjudged the Premier and Treasurer. They should not have misjudged him, because over the last few years they have had plenty of opportunity to know his resolve and the resolve of the Bjelke-Petersen Government. Only 18 months ago they saw what happened. Another section of politics misjudged the resolve of the Premier and Treasurer and of the National Party Government. The unions had that knowledge. For a number of years they have known that Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen does what he says he will do and that he means what he says. He has adopted that approach all along.

Mr Vaughan: That is what they thought about Hitler, too!

Mr HARPER: The honourable member knows that the Opposition members who belong to unions other than the ETU—of course, two gentlemen opposite must be excluded—know full well that their unions realise that the ETU has made and was making a mistake. So there is no excuse for that error in judgment made by the Electrical Trades Union. It should have known that when the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland said to those unionists, "You will obey the order of the Industrial Commission or from 7.30 on Monday morning your jobs are finished." However, they could not heed the lesson of history.

Mr I. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr HARPER: As the Minister for Mines and Energy said, they misjudged the feelings of the people of Queensland. Make no mistake about it, the people of Queensland on both sides of the political fence are united and determined not to be held to ransom by the trade union movement in the electricity industry.

The Opposition has convinced itself and attempted to mislead the public into thinking that, once the period of the state of emergency has elapsed, the union has only to go to the Industrial Commission and it will obtain an order from the commission for reinstatement of the sacked workers on the same very privileged terms as they had enjoyed previously. That is where the error in judgment occurred. It is the Government's very firm resolve that it would be totally wrong for any such proposal to be accepted.

Men have stayed at work at SEQEB in the face of pressure and intimidation. I am not antagonistic to the better parts of trade-unionism, but no responsible member of a trade union could condone the type of intimidation and harassment that has taken place. I have not seen the Opposition come out publicly and say anything about that. As the leader of the Liberal Party said, the Opposition has been silent on the issue. It is time that the Opposition came out and made the point that it does not believe in harassment and intimidation. The Leader of the Opposition should tell his fellow-unionists to act democratically and to recognise their responsibilities.

These men, who have had to face pressure and intimidation, have provided a service rightly expected by the residents of south-east Queensland—an essential service. New employees have been engaged. They are men who recognise that the new terms and conditions offered are fair. Even a few of the dismissed workers have come back under the new terms, and they deserve credit for that.

The Government recognises and applauds the courage of the men who have remained loyal to their fellow-Queenslanders in the face of the pressure and intimidation that is part and parcel of this union's tactics. The Government sees no reason why the sacked men, who have abused their privileged position, should be taken back on their old terms

and conditions to the detriment of those who were prepared to ensure that the citizens of south-east Queensland did not suffer.

The Government does not believe that SEQEB and the people of Queensland should be obliged to bear the cost of SEQEB's employing considerably more men than it had on its pay-roll before the strike started.

That is another area in which the stupidity of the Electrical Trades Union leadership comes to the fore. Before the dispute erupted it was recognised that SEQEB already had too many employees in its work-force. It was known throughout the work-force of SEQEB that there would be a run-down in the number of employees. However, the ETU leadership disregarded that fact. That was a total error of judgment. The Government would be derelict in its duty if it allowed that to happen. The provisions of the Bill, which will stop such a development, are obviously reasonable.

I have already spoken about pressure and intimidation being part of the armoury of some trade unions. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, I say "some trade unions", because, fortunately, there are some responsible trade unions in this State and in this country.

The other major provision in the Bill is designed to prevent harassment and obstruction of people who want to do their normal work, who volunteer to work in providing electricity for the benefit of the community and who act in accordance with an order of the commissioner. The need for these provisions is too obvious to need further comment.

In spite of the hysteria of the Opposition about this Bill, any fair-minded person who analyses it must conclude that it is a necessary and desirable piece of legislation. It is not extreme; on the contrary, it is rather moderate. It responds to a situation which the Electrical Trades Union has brought upon itself—not the Government, not the people of Queensland. Labor Party members know that. The leadership of the Electrical Trades Union has brought this upon itself. It is therefore nonsense for the Opposition to attack the Government on behalf of the union leadership when the Government responds in accordance with the wishes of the vast majority of the people of Queensland.

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (3.44 p.m.): It saddens me that I was in this House when what I consider to be most regressive and backward legislation was introduced. This legislation is the most anachronistic, draconian and vindictive legislation that I have ever come across. An interjection by the honourable member for Mulgrave (Mr Menzel), which was not heard by the Leader of the Opposition, put into context the attitude of the Premier and Treasurer and this Government. When Mr Warburton was making the point that the president of the Industrial Court (Mr Justice Matthews) criticised the Government for its attitude towards the Industrial Commission, the member for Mulgrave said, "We will have to sack him."

Mr Veivers: That is the attitude of the Queensland Government.

Mr De LACY: Exactly. That is the attitude of the Government. If people do not agree with it, it gets rid of them.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr De LACY: I notice that the honourable member for Mulgrave is in the House. When the honourable member is given an opportunity to speak, I ask him to deny that he said that the president of the Industrial Court should be sacked because he had the temerity to criticise the Government.

At the very beginning of this dispute, on 11 February 1985, the Government——

Mr Menzel: I would sack all of them.

Mr De LACY: I take up the interjection of the honourable member for Mulgrave. He said that he would sack all of them.

At the beginning of the dispute, the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission devised a package agreement that was accepted by two parties to the dispute, namely, the South East Queensland Electricity Board and the unions. The terms of that package agreement would have led to a speedy resolution of the problem and a return to work. However, what did the Government do? It declared a state of emergency, thereby rendering futile anything that the Industrial Commission had done. The attitude of the Government is to always cry about the law, but if the law does not concur with the Government's point of view, it gets rid of the law.

Last night I had the good fortune to view the inaugural edition of the new Australian Broadcasting Corporation's current affairs and news program "The National", which telecast a sympathetic report upon the concluding stages of the big miners' strike in the United Kingdom. The British Prime Minister (Mrs Thatcher) is now claiming a great victory, and I point out that whereas she may have won a victory over the miners who have returned to work, in terms of the divisions that have been created in that country, the suffering of individuals and the cost to the whole economy of Great Britain, it is a Pyrrhic victory similar to the victory presently being enjoyed, or which is being claimed, by the Premier and Treasurer in Queensland.

However, the feature of the report that struck me and which has remained in my mind was the interview with the mayor of a small city in Yorkshire that revolved around the mine. The interviewer asked, "What is the most enduring memory that you have of the whole strike?" The mayor replied, "Hatred and bitterness—hatred of the Coal Board, hatred of the Government and hatred of Mrs Thatcher." I say to the Premier and Treasurer that he has generated a great deal of hatred, bitterness and contempt in Queensland.

A short time ago, members on the Government side said, "Don't you go to the public. Don't you talk to the public?" In response, I say that I do talk to the public. Contrary to what Government members might say, hundreds of telephone calls have been received at my office, and I venture to suggest that my colleagues have also had hundreds of telephone calls to their offices. The telephone calls that I wish to mention to honourable members are couched in terms of "fascist" or "Nazi" when referring to the Government's attitude. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Burns) recently spoke about to the Premier and Treasurer's record in the war. Since that time, dozens of people have telephoned me, wanting to speak about the Premier and Treasurer's record during World War II.

It is all very well for Government members, particularly the Premier and Treasurer, to say that the public is on the side of the Government and that the public is saying, "Good on you, Joh." However, it can also be said that hundreds of people are not on the side of the Premier and Treasurer, are now divided over this issue and are being filled with hatred.

The Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper) said that the union movement had misinterpreted the resolve of the Premier and Treasurer. It is not resolve that motivates the Premier and Treasurer; it is deep-seated hatred for the trade union movement, and that is reflected in the legislation that has been brought forward. The legislation has not been introduced in the interests of good government, peace in the industry or continuity of electricity supply. The legislation is about destroying the trade union movement. From the very beginning of the dispute the attitude of the Premier and Treasurer has been unchanged. He said, "I'm interested in seeing that they are going to suffer as well." "They" were the trade unionists. He also said, "This is a contest in which they are going to suffer enormously and the Government will win."

I am reminded that last week I saw an interview with a person who, to a certain extent, was involved with this dispute. Mr John Barton asked Mr John Warren, the president of the Municipal Officers' Association, a question to this effect: "Where will all this hatred get you? You hate the Premier, the Premier hates you. Where will it all end ?" I thought Mr Warren replied very well in these terms: "I don't hate the Premier.

I don't hate anyone. I have seen a lot of people who hate and they became consumed by that hatred. I think, Mr Barton, you should address that question to your Premier." I address this question to the Premier: What basis for good government is deep and abiding hatred?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I refer the honourable member for Cairns to the provisions of Standing Order No. 120. I will read the Standing Order for his benefit—

> "A Member shall not digress from the subject-matter under discussion, or comment upon expressions used by another Member in a previous Debate of the same Session; and all imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections, shall be deemed highly disorderly."

I warn the member for Cairns that he is getting very close to contravening the provisions of that Standing Order relative to personal reflections and that, if he continues in that vein, I might have to deal with him. The honourable member will moderate his remarks.

Mr De LACY: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

This Government will go down in history as the most small-minded, most bloody-minded and most vindictive Government of all. As I said at the beginning of my speech, the legislation is repressive and vindictive. The attitude of this Government towards industrial relations is straight out of the nineteenth century. Students of history who read about the great strikes of the 1890s, just on 100 years ago, must be struck by the parallels between those disputes and the recent power dispute. In those days, the alignment of forces was the Government, the employers, the church and the media on one side, and the workers on the other. I leave it to members to judge for themselves which of those groups are still aligned. I took the opportunity of jotting down half a dozen cliches that were used in those days, and which I think indicate clearly the way in which the union-bashers of the world have attacked the trade unions with cliches ever since. I wonder whether members can remember these direct quotes from the history books—

> "Holding the nation to ransom.
>
> Our democratic system is at stake.
>
> People's right to work must be protected by the full force of law.
>
> Mass movement aimed at the overthrow of the State.
>
> Elected governments must be allowed to govern."

That was not the Premier speaking in 1985. Those were the words of the Government in 1891.

The outcome of those disputes in the 1890s was very similar to the outcome of many disputes these days. The hearts of the paranoid union-bashers on the other side should be gladdened by the fact that in those days the unions were defeated by a coalition of the forces of law and order—the bosses, the employers, the pastoralists, the Government, the profiteers, the crooks and so on. They won; the unions got done like a dinner.

I also read that when the strike collapsed and the strikers wanted their jobs back many employers made sure that the unionists drank the full gall of their defeat. Striking marine officers were required to apply for re-employment in these terms—

> "I respectfully beg to call your kind attention to the fact of my resigning from one of your company's ships on the 17th August, and having seen the folly of so doing, I beg to be reinstated in your company's service. I ask you to kindly consider my case, having served 15 years in the company's and your service."

I am pleased that the parliamentary counsel responsible for this legislation and the speech-writers for the Premier and the Minister for Mines and Energy did not have access to that document, because I am sure that if they had, that wording would have appeared in the legislation. After all, it is in exactly the same vein as the contracts that the Government expects the power workers to sign. Will you give us a guarantee that you will not move an amendment to that effect?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER : Order! I have pointed out previously that if a member is addressing his remarks to the Minister, it is important to refer to the Minister by his proper title. The honourable member made a comment that was nebulous without reference to the Minister's correct title.

Mr De LACY: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker; it was not important.

In Australia's history, two Governments have attempted to dismantle the industrial conciliation and arbitration system. They were the Moore Government, which was in office in Queensland between 1929 and 1932, and the Bruce-Page Government, which was in office federally at about the same time. The Moore Government was a National-Country Party Government that operated under a different name. It lasted a mere three years before it was hurled out in disgrace. It was in office for only three years in the middle of 40 years of Labor rule. It also is history that the Bruce-Page Government lasted less than three years. It was defeated in the House on legislation doing away with the arbitration system. It also is history that Lord Bruce was the only Prime Minister in history to lose his seat at the election in which the Government was defeated.

I remind the Government that it is tampering with Australian tradition. I interpret this legislation as going right to the throat of the industrial conciliation and arbitration system. The Government has found the commission to be even-handed in its approach to industrial disputes. The Government has therefore found it to be unsatisfactory, because it is impossible to score points and destroy the trade union movement when an impartial Industrial Commission considers matters dispassionately and makes judgments accordingly.

Mr Eaton: It was only a couple of years ago that the Premier was supporting the right to strike in Poland.

Mr De LACY: That is so. It is highly ironic that the Government should have a set of standards and values that it applies to the trade union movement in Australia, and a completely different set for the trade unions in a socialist country such as Poland.

Members of the Government should remind themselves that the vindictive attack on trade unionism started 100 years ago. The short battle in those days was won. This battle may or may not be won, but the Government will not destroy the trade union movement. It will not bring peace by using a bludgeon. In the long run, the Government will only entrench and strengthen the attitudes and institutions that it is so keen to destroy.

In a recent debate, it was said that trade unions in Japan do not take such action. Do Government members know why trade unions in Japan do not do so? It is because the management system in Japan takes into account the attitude of the workers. Unlike SEQEB, Japanese management does not introduce anything new——

Mr FitzGerald: Bunkum! It is the most progressive country in the world.

Mr De LACY: Exactly. I am coming to that.

Management in Japan does not introduce new measures in the way in which SEQEB introduced the new system of contract labour—without entering into full consultation with the work-force, and without getting the full acceptance of the work-force.

I advise Government members who dislike trade unions so vehemently that if they want to reduce the power of the trade unions they must make them irrelevant. The way to make them irrelevant is to talk to them and make them a part of the decision-making process—kill them with kindness, not with a sledge-hammer.

Members of the Australian Labor Party have been accused of aligning themselves with the trade unions on this dispute. I am unashamedly prepared to stand here or anywhere else in Queensland and say that I support the 1 000 Queensland workers who

have been sacked by the Government. I am equally prepared to support their families. The only crime committed by those workers was to try to secure their employment. They did that in the only way that a working man knows, the only way available to him. I am prepared to stand by them now, and I am prepared to go to the barricades with them.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (4 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join in the debate on this Bill. The long title of the Bill is, "A Bill to declare with respect to securing continuity of supply within the electricity industry"

We have just heard the honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy) say that he is willing to go to the barricades on behalf of the 1 000 SEQEB employees who lost their jobs as a result of the industrial dispute that occurred earlier this year. I point out to the honourable member that I, too, am willing to go to the barricades, to support those members of the Electrical Trades Union who have returned to work and continue to supply electricity to the people of Queensland.

I will go to the Lockyer electorate and support the 48 out of the 50 members at the Gatton depot who continued to work. I will stand in front of people and say, on behalf of the electors in my area, "We, the general public, have had enough of this industrial blackmail." Most of the SEQEB workers in my area returned to work. I do not say that all of them voted for the National Party at the last election, but I know that, if I stand in this Chamber and say that I will ensure that their conditions are maintained, at the next election I will, with some pride, be able to hand them a how-to-vote pamphlet. I know that many of them vote for the National Party, and those who do not will consider changing their allegiances. As their elected representative in this Chamber, I owe it to them to protect their interests.

This Chamber has the responsibility to legislate. Some Opposition speakers have said that industrial courts should legislate to carry out the wishes of the community. They must be very narrow-minded if they believe that the courts of this land should formulate legislation. They have the job to interpret legislation. It is the responsibility of members of this Chamber to formulate legislation and, at election-time, to be judged by the people on whether they have performed their duty. I know that Opposition members are itching to go to the polls, and they will have an opportunity to do so at the end of 1986. At that time this issue may be raised. Unless the Government has shouldered its responsibilities, it will not have fulfilled its task of governing the State. In a democracy, Governments, not unions, have the power to legislate.

This Bill deals with continuity in the supply of electricity. During the debate reference has been made to the rights of workers to strike, the rights of people to have continuity in the supply of electricity, the rights of consumers, the rights of small-business people, the rights of house-holders, the rights of primary producers to receive electricity, the rights of mining companies to receive electricity to fill their orders and the rights of business to engage in trade unimpeded by interruptions to the supply of electricity brought about by unnecessary strikes.

Business must have the right to be able to develop trade and to be competitive on the world markets so that Queenslanders and Australians can continue to enjoy the prosperity that they presently enjoy. The right of people to strike has to be tempered with the right of people to receive electricity and other essential services.

The Builders Labourers Federation is an exponent of industrial blackmail. What right have workers from that union to stop work and demand their rights in the middle of a concrete pour? Unless the contractor contributes to the Norm Gallagher pension fund, or whatever it is, his workers will make sure that a concrete pour is held up so that he loses money.

What right do the electricity workers have to hold this State in a grip similar to that of the building workers? They have a foot on our throats, kicking us in the stomach,

and, at the same time, they want to negotiate for their rights. That is not what we want in Queensland.

Mr Fouras: I have a question.

Mr FITZGERALD: If the honourable member puts it in writing, I may have a chance to look at it.

Even Opposition members shy away from the thuggery of the BLF; but if they believe that the power station operators should be aligned with the BLF, they should stand up in this place and say so. The Government has a responsibility to the consumers of the State to make sure that the supply of electricity is continuous.

I draw the attention of the House to some of the results of the industrial unrest within Queensland and Australia. In a recent edition of "Overseas Trading", the journal of the Department of Trade that landed on my desk half an hour ago, an article entitled "Japan names three 'Ps' for entry to market" appears. It is a report of the Japanese Market Access Promotion Mission to Australia, which lists recommendations to expand Australian export sales. The first paragraph reads—

> "Persistence, performance and price are the key to entry to the Japanese market, according to the report of the Japanese Market Access Promotion Mission which visited Australia in November."

In September, I was in Japan with the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) and we toured a steel-mill called Ogashima, which is on Tokyo Bay. At that place, we saw a large supply of coal from Australia and the Quintex mines in Canada. I understand that, because of the inconsistency of supply of coal from Australia, the Canadian company has signed a contract with the Japanese to supply 9 million tonnes of coal over a period to that steelworks. I hung my head in shame when I realised that Canadian coal was supplied to that market at a price that is substantially higher than that of Australian coal.

I notice that honourable members opposite have stopped interjecting. They are probably finding my speech boring because they have heard what I am saying before. It is well known that unless Australia is competitive and can supply these markets, it will lose out. The mining companies, the Government, the mine-workers and other unionists will lose out; in fact, the whole nation will lose out. It is little wonder that Australia's trading position in the world is slipping year by year. Unless industrial lawlessness in essential services is curbed, Australia is doomed to a fate of being a third-rate banana republic.

An Opposition Member: We are already.

Mr FITZGERALD: The honourable member just said that Australia already is a third-rate banana republic. I do not agree with that, because this nation has much cause for hope.

The honourable member for Cairns gave the House a history lesson when he went back over the industrial turmoil that has taken place over the years. From the way in which he spoke, I think that he would blame Maggie Thatcher, who is the present Prime Minister of Great Britain, for the 1926 coal-miners' strike, which was a major strike.

Unless the Governments of this country, which represent the views of the people, say that enough is enough, industrial unrest will continue. As to the rights and responsibilities of the trade union movement in essential services, public opinion is now at a watershed. History will record the Government's stand and the introduction of this Bill as a watershed.

The Queensland Government is probably the first in Australia to stand and say that electricity supply is an essential service and that it will do its utmost to ensure that the electricity consumers of the State have a continuous supply. The Government has spent billions of dollars on the construction of power stations and transmission lines

and the development of coal-fields to ensure the generation of electricity. The Minister for Mines and Energy has the responsibility of calculating the future consumption of electricity and planning the provision of power stations over the years to ensure that people have a supply of electricity when they demand it. The unions then use the electricity supply and distribution system as a thumbscrew to screw the people into submission and to say that the unions have rights.

In the past, the Government tried to ensure a continuous electricity supply by giving power station operators many job benefits. I am sure that all honourable members know that the power station operators who have thrown Queensland into chaos have total annual incomes ranging between $32,500 and $60,000 and work a 36½ hour week. Many operators receive heavily subsidised housing and a 2½ per cent loading over the above award rates. Long service leave of 13 weeks after 10 years is paid to most operators at a loading of at least 40 per cent. They also receive shift loadings additional to the generous week-end penalties that apply, and most operators receive a 30 per cent loading on their supernnuation payout——

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is reading from a document and I ask that he table it. I have that right.

Mr FITZGERALD: I will table the document. I will also give the honourable member for Brisbane Central a copy.

The unions, when offered arbitration to settle the dispute before a full bench of the Industrial Commission, refused to agree to abide by any decision of the commission and have now defied a total of six recommendations and three orders of the Industrial Commission to return to work. The Opposition wonders why, after having learnt of those conditions, the citizens of the State are beginning to react against the electricity workers who, although they continued to draw full pay, would supply the State with only 50 per cent of its power needs. The Opposition wonders why people became upset and why advertisements such as the following one in the Toowoomba "Chronicle" were inserted in newspapers throughout the State—

"It's time to
be counted!
Democratic Government
is at the crossroads.
Are you prepared to back the
elected Government of the day to
govern our State for the good of
everyone?"

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! Persistent interjections will not be allowed. I warn the honourable member for Ipswich.

Mr FITZGERALD: The advertisement continues—

"If you believe that the elected Government should run this State and you oppose unions that break the law and hold an entire state to ransom—as your personal protest against those unions that defy the law we urge you and your friends to sign below!

This form will then be forwarded to the Government as a sign of your support for elected Governments to run our state.

Return this to The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 138, Toowoomba 4350, by the 28th February, 1985.

Inserted by the chamber as a

means of giving the public a tangible
opportunity to state
'We've had enough!'
Authorised by the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce"

I can report to the House that a bundle of those advertisements about 30 cm thick, containing thousands of names, was handed to the Premier and Treasurer. That gives some indication of what the general public thinks about the matter—"We've had enough!"

Ms Warner: We have had enough, too. We have had enough of you.

Mr FITZGERALD: I have been complimented. The Opposition has had enough of my speech.

As members of the Government, we believe that we have a responsibility to pass legislation. Unless the Government——

Mr Hamill: The Parliament has the responsibility of passing or rejecting legislation.

Mr FITZGERALD: The Parliament has the right to pass or reject legislation. That is democracy, and obviously the Opposition will divide on the Bill later this evening. This Assembly will enact that legislation, and that legislation will then come into force.

When the Government goes to the people, probably at the end of 1986, it will be judged on whether it has faced up to its responsibilities. When those people who are sick of strikes see the damage that has been caused by strikes, they will realise that the Queensland Government has had the intestinal fortitude to stand and deliver this watershed legislation. I believe that the Opposition will not have a leg to stand on.

Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the document referred to.

Ms WARNER (Kurilpa) (4.15 p.m.): It is interesting that the member who preceded me in the debate said that the Government will stand and deliver. It is probably not surprising that Government members have used schoolboy-type slogans, because, in many ways, the Government's actions over the past few weeks have been nothing more than schoolboy thuggery. In the long run, the Government will not get away with it. In the process of their thuggery, Government members have made life almost intolerable for the people of Queensland. This legislation is perhaps the worst example so far of that type of thuggery. Fundamentally, it takes away the only freedom of a worker, which is to withdraw his or her labour. That is the only thing that a worker has to sell. He is not a profiteer. He does not own large blocks of land. He does not own the means of production. All he has is his labour. All we have is our labour. If that is taken away, a fundamental right is being taken away from a section of workers in this State. A slave camp is being created. Under the legislation, anybody working in the electricity industry will become a slave.

Perhaps the most frightening part of this legislation is clause 3, which gives to the Electricity Commissioner enormous powers to direct any person in the electricity industry to do whatever in his opinion is necessary to provide, to maintain or to restore a supply of electricity. Those powers are exceedingly broad. They are so broad that one would hope that the Electricity Commissioner is a man of some responsibility. However, it would be difficult to be a responsible manager in this State, because the Premier and Treasurer would be continually looking over his shoulder and urging him on to more and more excesses.

At no stage during the dispute was the SEQEB management allowed to carry out its own negotiating to maintain a proper work-force in the industry. I would have thought that, after the harassment by the Premier and Treasurer and after the complete subjugation of his Ministers—they should have known better—some reasonable agreement would be reached within the industrial relations system in this State. That was not allowed. The Government had to step outside the industrial relations arena and into the law of

the jungle, the law of points-scoring in the media. The Premier and Treasurer used all types of metaphors to delude, befuddle and completely confuse the people of Queensland. The electricity industry, and the linesmen, were described as dead horses, mice in the dark and mouldy bread. Other ridiculous statements were made. At one stage during the strike it was hoped that when the Premier and Treasurer ran out of ridiculous metaphors the whole dispute would be over; but no, he is still coming out with all sorts of idiotic statements.

The powers vested in the Electricity Commissioner under this legislation are frightening. They are literally fascist powers. The Electricity Commissioner has wide powers to order anybody to supply the electricity. If a person disagrees with him in any way for whatever reason—one must admit that disputation within an industry can occur over very small matters—the penalty is summary dismissal from which there is no appeal. How is that for basic, natural justice—summary dismissal with no appeal facility? That is a disgrace. A further penalty of $1,000 is proposed in the legislation. If a person cannot pay the fine, he could be declared bankrupt.

Mr FitzGerald: Are you talking about the right to send people bankrupt?

Ms WARNER: Yes, I am talking about sending people bankrupt.

I am also talking about the bloody-mindedness of this Government during the last few weeks when it took Queensland to the brink of disaster over the question of electricity supply. The people sent to the Industrial Commission by the Government were not given the authority to negotiate. At no stage did the representatives of the Government have that authority. On the other hand, the trade union movement acted in a totally responsible manner.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! The honourable member for Kurilpa will address the Chair.

Ms WARNER: The people of Queensland and industry in Queensland were taken to the brink of disaster, not because of the actions of the trade union movement but because of the actions of the Premier and Treasurer of this State and his henchmen who sit on the Government side of the House. The trade union movement was totally responsible in its attitude. It was concerned about jobs for its members, jobs for the people of Queensland, jobs in Gladstone, jobs in the electricity industry and jobs in industry in general. Therefore, it was the ETU members who took the step of reconnecting the power on that fateful Thursday, thereby putting themselves into the hands of this Government. It may be thought that that was a tactical mistake. In fact, I think it was; but it was a sign of their responsibility. It was a sign that the ETU members are responsible people. They did not want to see the smelter in Gladstone collapse. They did not want to see the grid system collapse. They did not want thousands of people to be out of work.

It is the Government that did not care about industry in this State. It is the Government that was prepared to allow the whole industrial system in this State to collapse. Government members did not care; they just wanted to subjugate a section of the work-force and use that petty victory over 1 000 people as a means of attacking the rest of the work-force in Queensland.

The Government is very short-sighted. It may very well win a few small battles, because it has the big guns. As the Government has control of this Parliament, this legislation can be pushed through in one day, and that is against the rules of this Assembly. It breaks its own rules. The Government has irresponsibly suspended Standing Orders.

Mr FitzGerald: We make the rules in this House; you know that.

Ms WARNER: Government members make the rules in this House; Opposition members oppose them.

Opposition to the Premier and Treasurer is not allowed in Queensland. If someone opposes the Premier and Treasurer in Queensland, he is liable to be fined or thrown into gaol. That is Hitlerism. That is a sign of fascism. If Australia were a Moslem country, it would be an ayatollah type regime that is being developed today in Queensland. Presumably, the next piece of legislation will be to cut off fingers and toes instead of merely fining people. That is the mentality of members on the Government side of the House. Perhaps I should not give Government members any ideas, because they will probably pursue them.

Last week I was told by a Government member that might is right. What a notion from a so-called democratically elected member of Parliament in a so-called free society. Might is right! What about the people who are not mighty? Most people in Queensland are not mighty. People who struggle on a daily basis to maintain their living conditions and their working conditions are not mighty. They are the people who seek the protection of the democratically elected members of this House. However, such people can be completely dismissed by this Government. It has no interest at all in the ordinary workers.

I will return to the legislation and talk about the ramifications of it as it relates to the development of society in Queensland. The most hideous aspect of this legislation is that it is a landmark in industrial relations in this country. It is the sort of thing that will lead to continual mayhem and disruption, because the people of Queensland do not yet have a slave mentality, in spite of their being pushed and beaten and held down by the likes of the Premier and Treasurer with all his posturing, threats and all the rest of it.

As a sequel to that unnecessary provocation, despite the fact that people are willing to work in the industry and members of the trade union movement are prepared to negotiate over the terms of employment, the Government remains hell-bent on destroying that particular section of workers, come what may. When it is measured against any civilised standard of behaviour in a so-called free society, that is the principle which is unacceptable, especially as people in the community are unfortunately in the throes of losing such a society. If the standards of a free society are lost, it will be a sad day.

The legislation presently before the House is a tragic piece of legislation, because it will mean untold misery and virtual slavery will be inflicted upon the people of Queensland. Although consumers presently enjoy an electricity supply, it is cold comfort against the realisation that the electricity industry in this State is approaching breakdown point—a fact that has already been referred to by Opposition members and by responsible members of the Electrical Trades Union.

When the Opposition asked the Minister about a man who had driven his crane into a power cable and was burned—a fact that had been reported in the press at the height of the dispute—the Minister said that that had not occurred. Surely that must have been the Minister for truth, or the Minister for propaganda speaking. The Minister wants to believe whatever is convenient for him and prefers to ignore the facts. That is what has been happening, and it happened throughout the recent dispute.

It should also be said that members of the trade union movement are angry, upset and sad and, in the short term, will be unable to take peremptory action. However, in the long term, those people will again establish a decent system of industrial relations that everyone in this country will be able to abide by, even if the Government will not. A place for the kind of thuggery which has been embodied in the legislation that has been brought forward would not be found in a decent system of industrial relations. The legislation is the typical sledge-hammer enactment that the Government proposes in order to crack whatever kind of nut the Government happens to be dealing with at the time.

Another problem presented by the legislation is the total disregard of the jurisdiction of the Industrial Commission, which has been abrogated by the provisions of the Bill. The system of arbitration that operates in this State will be taken away and the arbitration

system will be placed in the hands of a Mickey Mouse, kangaroo court, the terms and principles of which have not yet been framed and are yet to be introduced.

The status of the contract that has been mentioned in the Bill raises a question. Does it mean that the Electrical Engineering Award as it presently stands will be superseded? Does it mean that every time an alteration is to be made to the award, the matter will be the subject of new legislation? If that is so, on any across-the-board provision that became the subject of a dispute between workers and the Government, the Government could introduce a piece of legislation that enshrined in an act of Parliament the awards relating to that particular section of workers, and the House would do nothing except process alterations to awards.

I point out that a system of Government presently operates that provides an instrument of the State—the Industrial Commission—to determine those matters, and members of the commission have a specialised knowledge of the principles that operate and an understanding of the points of view of people on both sides of the industry. The commission had the audacity to recommend to the Premier and Treasurer and to the Government the reinstatement of 1 000 sacked workers, and I emphasise that it was merely a recommendation. The sacked employees were denied the right to strike, and I point out that denial of the right to strike is a denial of basic human justice. On any basis at common law, that kind of action is illegal, and therefore the sackings were illegal under the basic tenets of any system of justice. Because the commission dared to say that they should be reinstated with their full conditions, it was completely dead-horsed. It was not just the electricity industry that was dead-horsed, as the Premier so quaintly put it, it was also the Industrial Commission.

Mr Hamill: Clause 8 of the Bill would seem to be a vote of no confidence in the Industrial Commission by this Government, a vote of no confidence in its own case, because it is not prepared to go to the Industrial Commission.

Ms WARNER: It is clear that the Government thought it would be politically unwise to proceed beyond Thursday with the state of emergency. So what did it do? It introduced a mini state of emergency in order to tie the hands of the Industrial Commission and prevent it from making a legally binding order on the Government to reinstate those men.

I cannot understand the sheer vindictiveness, nastiness and pettiness displayed by the Government in the sacking of those 1 000 men—worried family men—a number of whom are right now downstairs at the gate. Believe me, if those men want the support of Opposition members and the support of the trade union movement, they will get it, and for as long as we can possibly give it. They will get every ounce of our energy in support of their just demands for a decent job with the wages and conditions——

Mr Cooper: They had one before; they sacked themselves.

Ms WARNER: Yes, they had jobs, and they wanted to talk about saving those jobs. They did not want the introduction of contract labour. It is the right of every person to take action to try to secure his job.

A Government Member interjected.

Ms WARNER: The honourable member takes action to secure his job. He continually runs round promising people lollies in order to secure his job—pork-barrelling all over the place. That is all that Government members do. And that is what those men were doing, moving to protect their own job security, and for that they have been thrown out of work and vilified by the Premier. Those perfectly ordinary family men have been described in almost the sort of terms reserved for Attila the Hun.

It is beyond belief that members should have to debate this legislation—although, as everybody knows, there is no real debate in this Chamber, because every set of ears on the Government side is totally closed. Three weeks ago the Premier made up his

mind about what he wanted to do with the power workers, and there is not a power in this place that can change his mind. But the reason for that is not only the Premier's action but also the Government members' irresponsibility in letting him get away with it. They do not take any notice at all of what is going on in government. I suggest that the back bench of the National Party does not have any interest in the government of this State; it is simply a rubber stamp for whatever happens in the Cabinet. I would love to be a fly on the wall of the Cabinet-room to watch the 17 sycophantic people listening to the dictates of the Premier. There is not enough guts and determination opposite to debate an issue. Members are not allowed to debate an issue, because debate requires that there must be some give and take. As I have seen on a great many occasions, there is no give; there is only take, there is only dictatorship.

Because I am not a prophet I do not know whether the trade union movement will win this particular round, but I can say that the Premier ought to take notice of the fact that the more he kicks the workers, the more resistant they will become; the more he kicks Opposition members, the more resistant we will become. The iron is entering our soul, and we are reaching the stage at which we can no longer tolerate what happens in this Chamber.

Over the next few months the people of Queensland will discover whether the Premier has the capacity to safely conduct the electricity industry. I suggest that he does not have that capacity. He does not have the capacity to know what is technically safe, what is humanly possible or what is humane. The thing that is most characteristic about this legislation is its total inhumanity. Yes, the Premier can use his numbers and his might to subjugate a whole group of people. He might be able to do that for a number of years but, believe me, not for ever. People are not like that. They are self-activating. People do change history and they will change history. They will change the Premier and the Government of Queensland in the near future. Every effort must be made to ensure that that happens, or we will be living in a slave camp.

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (4.36 p.m.), in reply: I will repeat the first paragraph in my speech for the benefit of honourable members—

> "Basically, the purpose of this Bill is to translate into statute laws the provisions of the Orders in Council, made during the state of emergency and proclaimed under the State Transport Act 1938-1981, affecting employment in the Queensland electricity supply industry."

That statement was quite clear.

The Opposition spokesman on energy matters, the honourable member for Nudgee, spoke about the history of SEQEB and took members on a Cook's tour. He spoke about Mr Wayne Gilbert, the SEQEB manager, who has done a marvellous job for the industry. If the men in the industry had been patient and given him a chance he would have effected marvellous improvements. However, last June, when the Government presented an agreement for the SEQEB men to look at, they wrote back and said that it was not acceptable. Although they recognised that they needed an agreement, they wanted to argue about the number of people working in the industry. In their letter, they even said that they would go as far as industrial disputation to achieve their ends. That threat was contained in the letter which was written subsequent to the agreement being presented to them. Opposition members should read the letter to see what they threatened. Their threats came to fruition.

During the debate, several Opposition members referred to safety. The Act is very clear on safety and many other matters. Opposition members should be looking closely at what the union leaders have been doing. Opposition members suggested that there should be no trade-offs. What trade-offs did the unionists give the people of Queensland? In my opinion they did not address themselves to the matter of trade-offs in any way.

The Government, for its part, compromised to the extent that it made an offer, on paper, that was a long way from the original proposal. Of course, the unions did not have the sense to take it up.

It is quite obvious that the honourable member for Nudgee supports strikes in the electricity industry and does not support the rights of the people. He stands behind a few union leaders against the two and half million people of Queensland. That will be made known to the people of Queensland.

The honourable member for Nudgee spoke about the Industrial Commission. In my opinion the establishment of a separate tribunal is in no way an insult to the commission. It is a positive way of dealing with industry that stands on its own. The coal industry and the air pilots have separate tribunals. What is wrong with a tribunal for the electricity industry, which is an essential service that stands on its own and must produce a continuous supply of electricity? All other matters must be taken into account in exchange for continuity of supply. The same principles do not apply to other unions in other industries. In setting up the tribunal in a proper, correct manner. I see no insult or reflection on the Industrial Commission. The unions should be pushing for such a tribunal. In fact, in their own paper, they partially agreed to it. If it is done properly they should be a party to it, encourage it and help make it work even better.

The Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs outlined some of the history, implications and results of the strike.

The honourable member for Bulimba spoke about the policy of the National Party. He also referred to industrial relations. I am afraid that, judging by his actions and history, the member for Bulimba is a typical example of political muscle without very much brains or responsibility. He talked about the International Labour Organisation. The ILO is not running the State, and there is no way that it will.

Reference has been made to workers in the other countries not being able to strike. Strikes do not occur in industries in many countries, including some Commonwealth countries. An honourable member referred to the Japanese. The Japanese do not strike. They have pride in their country and they realise what strikes would do to it. Their unions exercise responsibility that has not been shown by any union in this State.

The Government has tried to stop this strike. Since June last year it has been walking on hot coals trying to stabilise things. The Government has been trying to get the men to sign the agreement. It was a generous agreement. As I have said, that agreement is no longer available to them. They had their opportunity to sign it. The union leaders did not show any leadership in that regard.

The honourable member for Bulimba admitted that there were faults on both sides. That is interesting. I have not heard any Opposition member make such an admission.

Severe criticism has been levelled at various industry representatives. Mr Siebenhausen has come in for a bit of a caning. He represents that section of the community that has had a gutful of strikes, blackmail and the industrial muscle that has been used by unions to achieve their own ends.

It has been said that the Premier will be remembered for this dispute. I assure honourable members that the Premier will be remembered for the job that he has done. He has been trying to get stability into the electricity industry.

The honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) talked about the Act and other matters. He played a part in setting up the disputes—settling procedure, under the chairmanship of Jack Lacey, to deal with disputes involving the operators in power stations. It was a fairly good agreement, but it did not work. That agreement is still in place, but the operators were still involved in this industrial upheaval. Anything less than a no-strike agreement is not worth the paper it is written on. Union leaders are untrustworthy when it comes to those sorts of matters.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) talked about lawlessness and other matters. The union leaders used the men in a way in which they should not have been used. They misled the men; they took them to the cleaners. Then they made the great mistake of asking the Trades and Labor Council to turn off the lights. That is the greatest

mistake that they made. If the Government had the co-operation of the unions, there would be no need for this legislation.

The Government is determined to set up a strike-free system. The Premier of New South Wales (the Honourable Neville Wran)—not the Premier of Queensland—said that unions can no longer be allowed to hold the public to ransom and to destroy the State's economy to get their own way. He then sacked the railway workers in New South Wales and said, "You are not going to get away with it any longer." That did not happen in Queensland; it happened in New South Wales. The Queensland Government is doing the same thing to ensure a strike-free electricity industry.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time (Mr I. J. Gibbs's motion)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 45		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lickiss	Braddy	Warburton
Alison	Lingard	Burns	Warner, A. M.
Austin	Littleproud	Campbell	Wilson
Borbidge	McKechnie	Casey	Yewdale
Cahill	McPhie	Comben	
Chapman	Menzel	D'Arcy	
Cooper	Miller	De Lacy	
Elliott	Muntz	Eaton	
FitzGerald	Newton	Fouras	
Gibbs, I. J.	Powell	Gibbs, R. J.	
Glasson	Randell	Goss	
Goleby	Row	Kruger	
Gunn	Simpson	Mackenroth	
Gygar	Stephan	McElligott	
Harper	Stoneman	McLean	
Harvey	Tenni	Milliner	
Henderson	Turner	Palaszczuk	
Hinze	Wharton	Prest	
Innes	White	Price	
Jennings		Shaw	
Katter		Smith	
Knox	*Tellers:*	Underwood	*Tellers:*
Lane	Kaus	Vaughan	Davis
Lester	Neal	Veivers	Hamill

Resolved in the affirmative.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah): I seek leave to suspend so much of the allocation of time order agreed to on this Bill so that debate of one hour's duration be allowed to consider the Bill in detail.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I point out to the House that the motion that was agreed to this morning states, inter alia—

> " . the passing of such Bill through all its stages this day; and if debate be not concluded by 4.45 p.m., the Chairman and the Speaker as applicable shall put all remaining questions necessary to dispose of the remaining stages without further amendment or debate."

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER Order! I warn the member for Lytton.

I am therefore advised not to follow the course of action proposed by the honourable member for Nundah.

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move—

> "That you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Bill in detail."

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 47		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lee	Braddy	Warner, A. M.
Alison	Lester	Burns	Wilson
Austin	Lickiss	Campbell	Yewdale
Booth	Lingard	Casey	
Borbidge	Littleproud	Comben	
Cahill	McKechnie	D'Arcy	
Chapman	McPhie	De Lacy	
Cooper	Menzel	Eaton	
Elliott	Miller	Fouras	
FitzGerald	Muntz	Gibbs, R. J.	
Gibbs, I. J.	Newton	Goss	
Glasson	Powell	Kruger	
Goleby	Randell	Mackenroth	
Gunn	Simpson	McElligott	
Gygar	Stephan	McLean	
Harper	Stoneman	Milliner	
Hartwig	Tenni	Palaszczuk	
Harvey	Turner	Prest	
Henderson	Wharton	Price	
Hinze	White	Shaw	
Innes		Smith	
Jennings		Underwood	
Katter	*Tellers:*	Vaughan	*Tellers:*
Knox	Kaus	Veivers	Davis
Lane	Neal	Warburton	Hamill

Resolved in the affirmative.

Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. I. J. Gibbs (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) in charge of the Bill.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! Under the provisions of the allocation of time order agreed to in relation to this Bill, I shall now proceed to put the remaining questions necessary to dispose of the Bill in Committee.

Question—That clauses 1 to 10, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 47		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Warner, A. M.
Alison	Lickiss	Burns	Wilson
Austin	Lingard	Campbell	Yewdale
Borbidge	Littleproud	Casey	
Cahill	McKechnie	D'Arcy	
Chapman	McPhie	De Lacy	
Cooper	Menzel	Eaton	
Elliott	Miller	Fouras	
FitzGerald	Muntz	Gibbs, R. J.	
Gibbs, I. J.	Newton	Goss	
Glasson	Powell	Hamill	
Goleby	Randell	Kruger	
Gunn	Row	Mackenroth	
Gygar	Simpson	McElligott	
Harper	Stephan	McLean	
Hartwig	Stoneman	Milliner	
Harvey	Tenni	Palaszczuk	
Henderson	Turner	Prest	
Hinze	Wharton	Price	
Innes	White	Shaw	
Jennings		Smith	
Katter		Underwood	
Knox	*Tellers:*	Vaughan	*Tellers:*
Lane	Kaus	Veivers	Davis
Lee	Neal	Warburton	Comben

Resolved in the affirmative.

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy): I move—

"That you do now leave the chair and report the Bill without amendment to the House."

Question put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 41		NOES, 36	
Ahern	Lingard	Braddy	Prest
Alison	Littleproud	Burns	Price
Austin	McKechnie	Campbell	Shaw
Borbidge	McPhie	Casey	Smith
Cahill	Menzel	D'Arcy	Underwood
Chapman	Miller	De Lacy	Vaughan
Cooper	Muntz	Eaton	Veivers
Elliott	Newton	Fouras	Warburton
FitzGerald	Powell	Gibbs, R. J.	Warner, A. M.
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell	Goss	White
Glasson	Row	Gygar	Wilson
Goleby	Simpson	Hamill	Yewdale
Gunn	Stephan	Innes	
Harper	Stoneman	Knox	
Hartwig	Tenni	Kruger	
Harvey	Turner	Lee	
Henderson	Wharton	Lickiss	
Hinze		Mackenroth	
Jennings		McElligott	
Katter	*Tellers:*	McLean	*Tellers:*
Lane	Kaus	Milliner	Davis
Lester	Neal	Palaszczuk	Comben

Resolved in the affirmative.

Third Reading

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a third time."

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 48		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lane	Braddy	Warner, A. M.
Alison	Lee	Burns	Wilson
Austin	Lester	Campbell	Yewdale
Bjelke-Petersen	Lickiss	Casey	
Booth	Lingard	Comben	
Borbidge	Littleproud	D'Arcy	
Cahill	McKechnie	De Lacy	
Chapman	McPhie	Eaton	
Cooper	Menzel	Fouras	
Elliott	Miller	Gibbs, R. J.	
FitzGerald	Muntz	Goss	
Gibbs, I. J.	Newton	Kruger	
Glasson	Powell	Mackenroth	
Goleby	Randell	McElligott	
Gunn	Simpson	McLean	
Gygar	Stephan	Milliner	
Harper	Stoneman	Palaszczuk	
Hartwig	Tenni	Prest	
Harvey	Turner	Price	
Henderson	Wharton	Shaw	
Hinze	White	Smith	
Innes		Underwood	
Jennings	*Tellers:*	Vaughan	*Tellers:*
Katter	Kaus	Veivers	Davis
Knox	Neal	Warburton	Hamill

Resolved in the affirmative.

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy): I move—

"That the title of the Bill be agreed to."

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 48		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lane	Braddy	Warner A. M.
Alison	Lee	Burns	Wilson
Austin	Lester	Campbell	Yewdale
Bjelke-Petersen	Lickiss	Casey	
Booth	Lingard	Comben	
Borbidge	Littleproud	D'Arcy	
Cahill	McKechnie	De Lacy	
Chapman	McPhie	Eaton	
Cooper	Menzel	Fouras	
Elliott	Miller	Gibbs, R. J.	
FitzGerald	Muntz	Goss	
Gibbs I. J.	Newton	Kruger	
Glasson	Powell	Mackenroth	
Goleby	Randell	McElligott	
Gunn	Simpson	McLean	
Gygar	Stephan	Milliner	
Harper	Stoneman	Palaszczuk	
Hartwig	Tenni	Prest	
Harvey	Turner	Price	
Henderson	Wharton	Shaw	
Hinze	White	Smith	
Innes		Underwood	
Jennings	*Tellers:*	Vaughan	*Tellers:*
Katter	Kaus	Veivers	Davis
Knox	Neal	Warburton	Hamill

Resolved in the affirmative.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (5.18 p.m.), by leave: Mr Deputy Speaker, the Premier asked you to let me go. During the debate just completed, I referred to a statement made this afternoon by the president of the Industrial Court. During my comments a member of the National Party back bench interjected that I was misconstruing the facts. At the sitting this afternoon, the President, Mr Justice Matthews, said—

> "This statement was not only hurtful and a denial of the years of upright and strenuous service which Commissioners have given to the State but it was also absurd."

He also said—

> "The absurdity would be recognised by all who have appeared before the Commission whether representing employers, unions or government; but the public is clearly expected to accept the truth and implications of it."

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention, Mr Deputy Speaker, to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition is not making a personal explanation. He is trying to get in some propaganda.

Mr WARBURTON: I conclude by tabling the document for perusal by honourable members.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 31 October (see p. 2110) on Mr Lester's motion—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr McLEAN (Bulimba) (5.20 p.m.): In his second-reading speech, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) said that these amendments are aimed

at broadening the basis of industrial safety coverage that exists under the Construction Safety Act. Although I agree that some of the proposals should do just that, I believe that some do not fit into that category.

I shall quickly go through the provisions of the Bill. The amendments cover the handling of asbestos, particularly the removal of asbestos from buildings, by including this work in the definition of "construction work" They provide for the clarification of the definition of a "house" They strenghten the provision that covers the giving of names and addresses of offenders, to make the job of inspectors more workable. They streamline the procedures for obtaining an injunction. They substantially increase the penalties as a deterrent to $100,000 for bodies corporate and $25,000, or six months' imprisonment, for individual persons.

Inspectors are being given more protection from threats, abuse, physical assaults and the wilful disobedience of directions. They will have the power to call a police officer. It is also proposed to license demolition contractors. Six classifications of licences, including learners' permits, will be issued. Those provisions, if properly policed, will strengthen the Act.

The Construction Safety Act came into being in 1971. It was last amended in 1975. In those amendments, provision was made to cover off-site inspectors of construction equipment and gear, whether for hire or not. They also updated the provisions for the safe handling of pre-cast concrete panels for both workers and the general public. The definition of "construction work" was changed to include the dismantling and installation of machinery, plant and equipment. As well, a number of other improvements were made to the Act. That was 10 years ago. Of course, much has happened in the intervening period. New methods of construction and new equipment have been introduced, and further problems have arisen.

In 1975, the Opposition stated its support for the amending Act but felt that it did not go far enough in some respects. The same comment can be applied to this Bill. The amendments will strengthen the Bill, but I shall point out some areas in which more could have been done.

Because of the varied nature of the differing work-places, the wide range of equipment and gear used, the changing work-force and various other unique industry problems, the construction industry provides a work environment that requires special consideration. No two building sites are the same. New and varied equipment is adapted to meet new work methods used in an ever-changing work area. Employees work in confined areas and at times their work is unrelated to other work carried out on the site. So, it is vitally necessary that strict safety guide-lines exist and are well supervised.

One of the main and certainly most serious problems that exist with construction safety is that the department is sadly understaffed. It has far too few inspectors. That statement is supported by officers within the department, union officials and workers on the job. The Government has failed in its responsibility to uphold the present Act and, unless more inspectors are employed, it is hard to see these amendments being of any substantial advantage.

One could go to the construction site opposite Parliament House and find dozens of safety breaches. Probably that would be the case in most building sites throughout the State. I do not blame the inspectors, but I do blame the Government for the way in which it has allowed the staffing in the department to drop. I repeat that, if the serious staffing shortage is not remedied, the amendments will not be of any assistance in achieving safety within the construction industry.

I agree with the addition of the words "the removal of asbestos from a building or structure or from machinery, plant and equipment" in section 6 of the Act. That will place the dangerous job of handling asbestos rightfully under closer surveillance. In that regard, I support the amendment contained within the Bill, because it deserves close

scrutiny. If the provision is administered properly, it could result in untold benefits to workers and the community at large.

Asbestos is found in most buildings, particularly older ones. It is common knowledge that, in many cases, it has been handled in a manner that is extremely dangerous not only to the workers involved but also to an unsuspecting general public and to unaware office workers in buildings in which asbestos work has been carried out.

The Bill provides for an inspector to call a police officer and that the authority of an inspector will be given to a police officer under the provisions of the Act. The Opposition is aware of the problems faced by inspectors in carrying out their duties, and know of instances in which inspectors have been assaulted, abused and ignored. The Opposition completely supports the Bill in this regard. If the provision works, the inspector will have more security and greater ability to carry out his duties. It will also increase his protection and improve what is at the moment an unacceptable situation.

The Opposition is concerned about the provision that gives the chief inspector the power to issue temporary permits for work that is usually carried out by certified workers. The Bill provides that, where the holder of a certificate of competency is not available to be engaged, a person of good repute who is not a holder of such a certificate, but who is nevertheless capable of performing such work and has sufficient knowledge to do so and is available to do so, may be granted a permit by the chief inspector upon the application of a contractor, subcontractor or employer, upon the payment of the prescribed fee, to engage in the occupation for which a permit is sought.

Any relaxation of controls over certificates of competency for occupations requiring considerable skill and experience is a backward step. In his second-reading speech, the Minister used the example of a hoist-driver. Although expertise is needed before a person becomes proficient as a hoist-operator, it is not the only occupation that falls into this category.

The Opposition is also concerned about the relaxation of controls over the certificate of competency required by a dogman. I find it difficult to imagine how this work can be done by anyone other than a certified worker who has completed the training and has the experience. The safety of the entire work-force on the construction site involves the dogman. It could prove to be very dangerous if a man performing those duties did not have the necessary experience.

Any relaxation of the provisions of the legislation could lead to potentially fatal consequences where riggers and scaffolders are used. The efficiency and ability of a certified rigger is essential to a safe work environment. His is a specialised job and employers cannot just pluck someone off the street to do it. The duties of a scaffolder are extremely important because nearly all workers on a site rely on his ability and experience to provide safe work areas on platforms, exits, etc. At times, just about every worker on the job would rely on the scaffolder's expertise for his safety. I do not believe that the skill requirements in these jobs should be relaxed. Scaffolders, dogmen, riggers and other specialist workers should be licensed to work on a construction site. To weaken those provisions is to take a backward step in what overall is not a bad piece of legislation, and the Opposition does not understand why the provision allowing for temporary permits has been included in the Bill.

The Opposition welcomes moves to license demolition contractors. It is long overdue, and it must assist the job of inspectors. Because many demolition contractors have ignored safety provisions completely, demolition work has created a problem within the building industry.

Mr Casey: Do you reckon the Deen brothers would get a permit?

Mr McLEAN: I was leading to that. Because of the way that the Deen brothers have carried out the wishes of the Government, they may get a permit.

Mr Shaw: They would get a night-time licence.

Mr McLEAN: Yes, they would get special consideration to allow them to work under lights.

At one time or another all honourable members would have watched with amazement as workers stood on the wall of a building being demolished, with a precarious drop on either side of the wall and no protection from falling, and swung dirty big sledge-hammers and bashed the heck out of bricks. That is not the way that workers should operate, but many demolition firms seem to take for granted that that is the way that they should operate. I can only support the Government's move to register these people and to provide much stricter safety procedures over the demolition of buildings. I have no opposition to that provision.

The Opposition views with some doubt the addition of the provision for the Minister to have powers of exemption. The Minister should state why the provision was added to the Bill and under what circumstances it will be used. The provision gives powers that did not previously exist and the necessity for such a provision should be fairly explained.

The Opposition does not argue with the proposals concerning appeals, licences, forgery of certificates, penalties for offences, the prosecution of offences, etc. As most of the amendments strengthen the legislation, the Opposition fully supports them. Because the neglect of construction safety procedures costs industry a great deal of money and causes workers much unnecessary pain and suffering, construction safety legislation is very important.

The Opposition does not object to the provision that allows for permits to be issued under certain circumstances for work usually covered by holders of certificates of competency. The Opposition feels that areas of work not covered in the definition of construction work, the installation of telephone equipment, the carpeting of floors, the erection or maintenance of electric lines on poles, the maintenance of electric lines on towers and the laying of railway lines should have been strengthened by amendments to the Act. Although the installation of telephone equipment and the carpeting of floors does not produce any obvious dangers, the erection or maintenance of electric lines on poles, the maintenance of electric lines on towers and the laying of railway lines do. From my perusal of a previous debate on this legislation, I know that a former Minister gave, as one of the reasons for the exemption of this type of work, the fact that the electricity boards have a very high code of safety and that they had satisfactorily looked after job safety.

Mr Davis: That is not the case now with SEQEB.

Mr McLEAN: That is exactly the point. As the member for Brisbane Central said, that is not now the case.

The Government has commenced to move the electricity industry away from semi-Government coverage to contractors and, in so doing, has considerably reduced safety provisions. Electricity contractors are not covered by the stringent safety regulations that apply to all boards throughout the State. The Minister must agree—if he does not, I am sure that his inspectors would agree—that contractors have a sad record in giving job safety a high priority in their endeavours, particularly when compared with the very fine safety efforts of the electricity boards. I repeat the example of the training being given to those who took the jobs of the sacked SEQEB workers, which I gave to the House last week during the debate on the electricity dispute. My information is that the new SEQEB employees who have taken the jobs of the dismissed linesmen are about to be given three weeks' training and will then go out into the field. The safety rules that existed before the dispute provided that linesmen receive 12 weeks' training in three separate periods. They had to complete 45 study papers and do 300 hours' work on dead lines.

If that safety background is compared with giving three weeks' training and then sending the worker out into the field, my argument that the electricity industry should be included in this Bill is supported. The Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) said previously that the electricity boards had a very high code of safety in that they have successfully looked after job safety in a satisfactory manner. That will not be suitable for the contractors who will be entering the electricity industry at an ever-increasing rate.

To draw some comparisons—a ladder leaning against a house is included, but a ladder leaning against a pole is not. Surely a worker is just as likely or is more likely to be killed or injured if he falls from a faulty ladder on a pole than if he falls from a faulty ladder on a house. I would like the Minister to inform me why electrical contractors cannot be covered by this Bill whilst working on poles or towers. It is very important that electrical contract work be covered by this Bill.

Railway electrification is not covered by the Bill. Railway electrification was introduced, I think, in 1971. It is a matter to which the Minister could give some consideration. Considering the number of contractors who may be involved in it, following the present problems in the industry, perhaps it should be covered by the Bill.

It is obvious that the Government's intention is to let out as much work as possible to contractors, and the same course will soon apply in respect of work on railway lines and bridges. The workers in those industries are entitled to the same protection as workers in other industries. If they fall over, they are injured and bleed as much as workers in other industries. The problems caused to their families are similar to those caused to other families as a result of accidents in other industries. Workers' safety relies on strict guide-lines that are enforceable and controllable.

It is very difficult to obtain up-to-date figures on industrial accidents. However, the figures that are available prove that, with strict surveillance of the safety provisions that exist, much more can be done to ease the burden on workers, their families and industry.

Although the Minister may have more recent figures, the latest that I have been able to procure show that, in 1982, 57 121 work-related injuries occurred in Queensland, with 1 245 509 days lost. That gives a good line on the type of problems to which I have referred. In the building industry, 9 623 injuries occurred, with 242 072 days lost. There were 11 deaths, 89 permanent injuries and 264 injuries resulting in the worker being incapacitated for more than 6 months. The problem is enormous and is one with which the Government is dealing to some degree as a result of the proposed amendments to the Act. If one adds up the pain and suffering and the cost to the industry, one knows that it is no idle claim that much more can and should be done to ensure the implementation of safety provisions.

I ask the Minister to reply to some of the questions that I have asked and to consider seriously including the workers whom I have mentioned so that they are placed under the provisions of the legislation at some stage in the near future. I ask the Government to consider in a more definite way the provision of more inspectors within the Occupational Safety Division.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (5.39 p.m.): A Bill is only as good as the enforcement of its regulations and operation. Although Queensland has good legislation to protect workers, the Construction Safety Act and this Bill will not mean much in practice. The Act is not being enforced, and even though it may be changed, it does not follow that enforcement of it will be any better.

At present the department does not have enough inspectors. An examination of staffing levels of the department over a decade reveals that many more inspectors should be employed. Accidents have occurred again and again.

I refer to the Auditor-General's report of 1981-82. The Auditor-General makes a special statement on what was then the Department of Employment and Labour Relations. That statement is as follows—

> "The staff ceiling imposed by needs for economic restraint in Government is the major contributing factor to construction work not being inspected."

That situation has not improved.

If the Act is to be a good one, the Bill must be drafted properly. In the same report the Auditor-General further says—

> " . a report furnished by the Internal Operational Audit Service. This report stresses the need for a thorough overhaul of administrative procedures and practices associated with the system in an endeavour to implement a more workable and economical system."

The report continues—

> "Appropriate action necessary to overcome the aforementioned problems is presently under consideration by the Department. In the interim period, departmental policy is to concentrate available resources into areas having high public risk potential."

One public risk potential that is not looked at is the number of deaths caused by trench cave-ins. I know that I have brought that matter to the attention of the Minister before——

Mr De Lacy: Another one in Cairns yesterday.

Mr CAMPBELL: Another such accident occurred in Cairns yesterday. The matter is very serious.

As long as contractors know that they can get away with not complying with the regulations, more deaths will occur. It is a major problem.

Bob Thompson & Company, plumbers, was fined $2,000 as a result of the deaths of two people. That was a lousy fine. That company broke regulations and ended up causing the deaths of two people.

It is good to see that the penalties will be increased for contractors who break regulations. Those contractors must be stopped, for two reasons. They not only place the lives of their workers in jeopardy; they also take work away from legitimate contractors who are doing the right thing.

It costs money to provide shoring and those additional safety measures. Contractors or subcontractors who do not adhere to the regulations are playing with death and are taking contracts that should go to contractors who do the right thing.

Last year, after Bob Thompson & Company allowed two people to be killed, that company was given subcontract work on Government works in Bundaberg. That company was awarded two jobs by the Government. No shoring was provided on either of those jobs. The company was allowed by this Government to get away with it because Government members are not prepared to put their money where their mouths are. They are not prepared to put people in the field to ensure that such rotten contractors are caught and not allowed to work.

Bob Thompson & Company carried out extensions on the TAFE college at Bundaberg. Photographs prove that no shoring was provided. Unfortunately, by the time the inspector arrived at the site to inspect those trenches—he had to come from Gladstone—it was too late to do anything about the matter. Another tragedy could have occurred.

The problem has been occurring for years and years. Auditor-Generals' reports as far back as 1973 reveal that workers have been killed as a result of trench cave-ins because contractors do not keep within the law. It is very important that the Government

ensures that such tragedies do not occur again. Contractors such as Bob Thompson & Company should not be given a chance to win Government contracts, because work is being taken away from good contractors. I mention this matter to highlight that this practice continues, as evidenced by the death that occurred yesterday in Cairns. I ask the Minister to take it upon himself to see what can be done. The problem created by the lack of worker safety has existed for many years.

I would like to inform the House about an accident that occurred at the coal-loading depot at Dalrymple Bay. A worker had previously warned of the dangers that were present, but was told to shut up. In this day and age, it is wrong that the workers have to point out the importance of safety regulations because the Government does not enforce them. I quote from a report in the "Daily Sun" of 14 September 1983, which includes part of a letter written by Mr Murphy to his wife on 30 August—

> "I don't think I will be able to keep my mouth shut about the safety conditions here, there are none whatsoever. Over 4 km of jetty with people working all along, there is not one lifebuoy or rope down to the water. If anybody went in, they would drown or be taken by a shark before a boat could reach them."

Less than a month later, five workers were killed when a bus plummeted over the side of the jetty. Four others were saved. That accident highlights the fact that the Government and the employer had made no contribution to worker safety in that field of industry. That kind of accident occurs time and time again because there are inadequate numbers of inspectors.

It is worth while examining the statistics to bear out the facts. In the 1983-84 report on the activities of the Division of Occupational Safety, it is stated that 23 949 inspections were carried out by the Construction Safety Branch. The figures contained in the 1981 report indicate that 40 647 inspections were carried out in the year covered by the report, so that, by comparison, nearly half as many inspections were carried out in the most recent period. The reduction in the number of inspectors is evident because people are being killed.

The other aspect of construction safety is the lack of training, which is a problem that I would like to draw to the Minister's attention. For instance, the use of lasers can be dangerous because a laser is a powerful instrument. I point out that no safety training program has been implemented to regulate the use of laser machinery.

An article headed, "Lasers are dangerous. Demand proper safety practices" reads—

> "Lasers are now becoming common on Queensland construction sites and workers should be aware that they can pose a serious hazard if not used correctly.
>
> The lasers in common use are Class I, Class II and Class III A. Any laser above Class III A should not be used.
>
> There are NO laser safety regulations in this State for the construction industry.
>
> The Australian Standard 2397—1980 is not being conformed to by contractors.
>
> The Australian Standard 2397—1980 states:—
>
> On each site where a laser of above Class I is in operation, a Laser Safety Officer should be appointed. Laser Safety Officers should be trained to a minimum standard as set out in Table S.1 of A.S. 2397—80."

Again, I point out that no training courses are offered in Queensland. The article continues—

> "Operators should be trained in accordance with table S.1 of A.S. 2397-80."

Again, no training courses are offered in Queensland. The article continues—

> "Appropriate warning signs should be permanently displayed."

Again, I believe that those warnings are not being displayed. The article continues—

> "The main danger arises because any visible laser radiation entering the eye is concentrated by the lens of the eye (by more than 100,000 times) on to a small

> spot on the retina, where it is absorbed and appears as heat, thus raising the temperature at that spot. If the temperature rises high enough, the tissue will be destroyed and permanent blindness at that spot will result. Damage may occur at any point of the retina. This means that if a person's eye is aligned with the beam or a direct reflection of it, the retina may suffer permanent injury whether s/he is actually looking at the beam source."

I call on the Minister to ensure that proper training is carried out and that safety procedures to at least the minimum standard set down under the Australian standards are adopted. The Government must ensure that work procedures are safe.

Two aspects of the Bill concern the Opposition. One is the use of asbestos. It is very important that contractors removing asbestos employ properly trained workers. At present, many contractors who are not even licensed are using casual labour which they take off the street and put to work without any training. In other words, the regulations might be in place, but the casual workers who are used by contractors are not being trained.

I turn now to problems caused by asbestos. I have here an article headed, "Asbestos Exposure To Kill Half Million Americans" Asbestos is a deadly, insidious product. The article states—

> "By the end of the century, more than half a million Americans—an average of 20,000 a year—will have died from the effects of asbestos exposure, a leading researcher says.
>
> Dr. Irving J. Selikoff, director of the Environmental Scienced Laboratory at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, said relatively little has been done to prevent asbestos exposure despite its known health hazards.
>
> He predicted 20,000 deaths will occur each year by the end of the century unless a massive public health campaign to eliminate the use of the material is undertaken."

That article was written back in 1980. Do honourable members realise that over 60 years ago insurance companies knew that deaths were related to asbestos poisoning? In fact, for that reason, over the intervening period they have placed a loading on certain insurance premiums. Yet until last year the authorities have not been prepared to accept that asbestosis is a work-related disease. I compliment the Minister for accepting that asbestos can cause work-related diseases, and I believe that that acceptance will now be widely recognised. The precedent has been set to allow workers and their families to obtain some compensation for the problems that they have been caused.

The honourable member for Bulimba (Mr McLean) referred to a number of problems that have arisen in connection with the Act. I want to know why the Bill includes, for the first time in many years, power for the Minister to exempt demolitions from the definition of "contract work"

Mr Davis: Like the old Deens and the "Bellevue"

Mr CAMPBELL: Does the honourable member think so? If that is correct, the provision should not have been included. The Minister must be able to give some reasons why he should have the power to exempt——

Mr Davis: They never got prosecuted. They broke every construction safety award when they belted down the "Bellevue", and this crowd never did one thing about it.

Mr CAMPBELL: If it is correct that the Government allowed those workers to break every rule in the book and did nothing about it——

Mr Stephan: You're good story-tellers, though, aren't you?

Mr CAMPBELL: It is unacceptable that there should be one law for some people and another law for other people. The Government has to ensure that there is no

patronage or favouritism, so that such things will not occur in the future. For instance, a problem still arises with trench cave-ins. They have been occurring for years, but nothing has been done about them. Very few prosecutions have been launched against the contractors involved, even though it has been shown on occasions that no shoring was provided. How many employers have been prosecuted? What value does this Government place on a worker's life? It seems that employers can break regulations, but even if a worker is killed his life is worth only $2,000. If a person is convicted for manslaughter, for instance, a much greater penalty is imposed.

The Bill also provides for the issue of temporary permits to engage in an occupation, but the problem is that no specific time-limit is set. A trainee rigger or a dogman could obtain a permit for a year in order to gain the necessary experience before he can actually apply for a certificate of competency as a rigger. It seems that these men get a permit for one job and, when it finishes, instead of sitting for the examination to gain a certificate, they go to another job, get another permit and carry on for another year. Workers are using permits year after year without trying to get a certificate. A time limit should be imposed so that workers get a certificate rather than have a permit run on and on. I hope that the new provision will not allow that practice to continue. The best way to overcome the problem would be to specify a time limit.

The chief inspector decides how long a permit will run. Perhaps a limit of 10 to 15 days or a couple of months could be set.

Another matter of importance is the time limits for the different skills required. Some jobs for which permits or certificates are required are fairly dangerous. If the men who get those permits are trained and experienced, why do they not get certificates? If they are competent to carry out dangerous jobs, they should have certificates. If a permit is given only for training, proper control should be exercised.

Another problem relates to staffing. If the staff members are not available to do the job, no matter how good the Bill is, it will not work. At one time an inspector was stationed at Bundaberg; now an inspector has to come from Gladstone. Although the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs is permitted to employ 41 inspectors, only 37 are employed. I want to know why the other four are not employed. Worker safety must be paramount. Everything must be done properly.

When trench cave-ins occur, it is obvious that nothing is being done to ensure worker safety. The Government should introduce appropriate regulations and training covering the use of lasers. It is criminally negligent if it does not train people in their proper use. If training is not provided, problems will arise and workers will be hurt. The Government must ensure that workers who remove asbestos are trained properly to carry out their job. That can be ensured only if contractors are licensed and if they use properly trained people.

Another matter of concern relates to the use of permits that allow workers to do a job without obtaining a certificate. I do not think it is necessary for the Minister to have power to exempt, because the exemption could be abused. I do not mean that the Minister would abuse the power, but certain organisations could do so. The Government should consider seriously whether that provision should be left in the legislation.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (7.15 p.m.): It must be recognised that safety measures cannot be enforced by legislation. They are enforced by the worker, the employer and the safety inspector. From time to time, carelessness does occur on building sites, and some incentive must be provided to people to create a safe working environment.

I compliment the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) and his department for introducing various safety awards in an endeavour to encourage safety in industry. That highlights the aspect that each worker must look after his own

well-being and that of his fellow workmen. For that reason, I have much pleasure in supporting this legislation.

So much is happening in the construction field. Different types of scaffolding are being used. Workmen must keep abreast of the new technology that is being introduced.

The role of the Division of Occupational Safety is to ensure that prescribed safety measures in industry are carried out and that adequate education is provided for persons at all levels in industry, from the employees to the principals in management, on the principles and practices of occupational safety and health generally.

In addition to the management of safety, a further important matter of concern is the conduct of continual reviews to add necessary requirements to take into account the changing practices in technology or to delete unnecessary requirements. That matter concerns not only workmen but also employers. The primary aim is to ensure the safety and well-being of all persons in employment so that the trauma, cost, anguish and possible financial hardship to a workman's family and to the community are reduced to an absolute minimum.

A great deal of industrial expansion is taking place throughout the State. One needs only to look at the number of cranes operating in Brisbane to see the confidence in the building industry in this State. That, together with other signs of renewed activity, makes the need for safe and healthy working conditions and safe practices paramount.

With the resources that are currently available, the Division of Occupational Safety is attempting to maintain the high level of safety in industry that has been achieved in past years. The honourable member for Bundaberg (Mr Campbell) highlighted one or two deaths that have occurred recently in north Queensland. Those deaths are to be regretted. Later, I shall mention some figures showing Queensland's safety record. One or two deaths in industry are the exception and not the rule.

As I have pointed out, the major function of the Division of Occupational Safety is to ensure that the demands of industry are met by having sufficient trained personnel available by a system of examination, testing and licensing of the various categories and operations.

Tonight, I am speaking about construction safety, but the division is concerned with other types of safety, including machinery and occupational safety. The machinery branch of the division, which administers the Inspection of Machinery Act and the Rural Machinery Safety Act, consists of 52 inspectors of machinery, including the chief inspector. In 1983-84, seven fatal accidents involving machinery occurred. That compares with the figures from 10 years ago. In 1972-73 and 1973-74, there were 20 and 16 fatal accidents, respectively.

Mr Davis: That's buildings.

Mr STEPHAN: No, I am talking about machinery.

Many accidents are the result of carelessness. In the 10 years to 1984, much has been achieved by education in an endeavour to convince operators of the need for safety precautions, particularly when using equipment such as V-belts and shafts. People tend to become a little blasé when working with machinery, and they accept that they may lose a finger or a toe. In the past, that would have been the attitude of workers in sawmills.

The Construction Safety Branch has a staff of 32 inspectors and five cadets. The inspectors are stationed in Brisbane, Cairns, Gladstone, Ipswich, Mackay, Mount Isa, Nambour, Rockhampton, Southport, Toowoomba and Townsville, and they are sent out to other centres. Because one or two deaths do occur each year, people tend to have a defeatist attitude. Of course, those statistics are to be deplored and no-one can be proud of them. However, Queensland does have a particularly good safety record. Inspectors from the Construction Safety Branch have carried out up to 24 000 inspections of building

and construction sites in one year. In 1983-84, only six fatal accidents occurred in the construction industry, so it can be assumed that the activities of the branch are having the desired effect in relation to safety practices generally. The highest number of fatalities in this industry occurred in 1972-73, when 13 people were killed. The number of fatalities has been reduced by half.

Accidents in the work-place can be likened to road accidents. When using the roads, one must continually be on the alert. At all times the community must endeavour to ensure that the number of fatalities is reduced even further so that the lives of young men and women, in particular, are not cut short by stupid, negligent or careless acts.

Training and education are an important aspect of the activities of the Construction Safety Branch. Courses in rigging, scaffolding, the work carried out by dogmen and the use of explosive power tools are held throughout the State. Anyone interested in occupational or construction safety would be very keen to take part in those courses and to pass on the information to their fellow workmen. The courses also highlight instances in which workers are neglectful or careless.

The Division of Occupational Safety provides a very comprehensive safety service in State Government departments and instrumentalities under the guidance of the Publicity and Education Officer and through the field officers who are stationed at various centres.

As I have said, legislation will not overcome all the problems. The operators of machinery must display a great deal of responsibility. For example, they should be made to wear the correct shoes, gloves and clothing, and to keep the floor or buildings in which they work clean and tidy so that they do not fall over pieces of equipment that have been left lying around. Although they may seem to be small points, a lot of harm can be caused if machinery is not attended when it should be.

Mr Davis: You should clean up after the milking.

Mr STEPHAN: As the honourable member comes from out west, where there are no dairy cows, he would know how important it is to keep the working environment clean, whether it be milking or construction equipment. The story is the same: it should be kept clean and tidy. I agree with the member for Brisbane Central on that. That is one of the few sensible things that the member for Brisbane Central has said since I entered this place. If he actually carries that out in his own operations and keeps his desk clean and tidy, he probably will not even prick his finger with a pin. He should keep his work area clean and tidy.

Some minor alterations and additions to the legislation will provide for the licensing of demolishers. The definition of "construction work" will be extended to include the removal of asbestos and the legislation will provide for the licensing of asbestos removalists.

The new section 52A will provide that, when a certificated person is not available but a person capable of doing the task is present, a permit can be issued to the person capable of doing the work until a certificated person can be obtained or the capable person himself can obtain a certificate.

Existing demolition contractors will be licensed, provided that they can produce evidence of experience in carrying out demolition work of the class or classes for which they seek a licence. After a period of three months from the date of commencement of these provisions, a person wishing to do demolition work will be required to pass an examination. Licences will be renewed every 12 months.

When a licensed demolition contractor seeks to obtain a licence in another category, a permit can be issued to him to carry out the demolition work in the classification for which he seeks the licence. When he meets the requirements, his licence can be endorsed with the additional classification.

I suggest that honourable members on both sides of the House support the Bill. Honourable members should bear in mind that safety begins with the individual. One cannot always point the finger and say that because something has happened in one field, it will happen in another field and therefore it is somebody else's fault. If all the points that have been made are taken individually and with a great deal of respect, I am sure that they will lead to a far safer State in which to live.

Mr DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (7.28 p.m.): As the Opposition spokesman the member for Bulimba (Mr McLean) stated, the Opposition supports the Bill.

Because it is beneficial to workers, it is totally different from the earlier legislation, which tried to solve industrial disputation. It demonstrates that, over the years, a great improvement has taken place in the safety of workers in industry. Statistics prove that twice as many days are lost through industrial accidents as through strikes. The amount of money paid in workers' compensation and the time lost through industrial accidents are staggering.

Mr McLean: It is strange that we have never heard the Premier get up in the House and bring that point to the attention of the people.

Mr DAVIS: That is absolutely amazing. I have never heard one member of the National Party bring that point forward. Of course, that is the difference between the Labor Party and the National Party. The National Party could not care less about the workers.

Mr Neal: That's not right.

Mr DAVIS: It is true. Over the years, it has been purely and simply industrial movement—

Mr Neal: You're being political.

Mr DAVIS: I am not being political.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will direct his remarks to the Chair.

Mr DAVIS: I will.

One knows about the conditions under which workers had to work 100 years ago. Basically, it has only been in the last 25 years that they have started to improve. I will give an example. I do not know whether the honourable member for Balonne was in the House at the time.

Mr Neal: For the last 25 years we have been in Government.

Mr DAVIS: It has not been a proud record. I will give the honourable member an example. Mr Speaker, I do not know whether you were a member of this Assembly at the time, but the first major high-rise building constructed in Brisbane was the SGIO building. About eight or nine deaths occurred during the construction of that building. Following industrial disputation, a number of representations were made to the Government to improve safety standards on new buildings. The late John Herbert was the Minister responsible for industrial affairs. I recall his making a ministerial statement to this effect, "The deaths are unfortunate, but you must realise that this is a new type of building. We are inexperienced in this new type of building. We do not have the safety regulations and so forth." What a ridiculous statement! Although that may have been one of the first high-rise buildings to be constructed in this city, in New South Wales and in other parts of Australia safety regulations had been in existence for years. I can recall seeing in the 1930s a movie of King Kong hanging by his toes from the Empire State Building in New York city, which had 100-odd storeys. The members of the National Party Government in Queensland are slow thinkers and they take some time to get back to the norm.

The Bill will license demolition contractors. I wonder whether the infamous Deen brothers will be licensed. Honourable members will recall the demolition of the "Bellevue". That was one of the greatest tragedies that occurred. The demolition of the "Bellevue" was carried out in the early hours of the morning. Honourable members in this Chamber raised the matter that Deen brothers broke just about every safety rule that the Queensland Government had on its statute-book.

Mr Yewdale: In the middle of the night.

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member is right. The Deen brothers got me out of bed, because I joined the 2 000 or 3 000 people who were outside the "Bellevue". As a matter of fact, we were lucky that we were not hit by the bricks and stones.

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member was not there. There were no National Party members within cooee of the building. As I said earlier, the only persons who were there were the former member for Pine Rivers——

Mr Neal: I was there till 2 o'clock in the morning.

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member was nowhere near the building. I was there. I did not see him there.

Mr Shaw: He was in hiding.

Mr DAVIS: He was hiding behind the bushes that were recently removed from the front of Parliament House.

The only other members of Parliament who were there were some of the back-bench Liberals, including the former member for Pine Rivers (Mr Akers), who threatened to resign because of what the Government had done. However, in the early light of the dawn he decided that that was too drastic a step to take, so he took his protest home.

The Opposition welcomes any improvement in industrial safety. The Opposition's spokesman (Mr McLean) and the member for Bundaberg (Mr Campbell) referred to asbestos and asbestosis, which is a problem that is arising in a large number of buildings. I draw the Minister's attention to the South Australian Industrial Safety, Health and Welfare Act 1972-1983. Under that Act, a licence can be granted for asbestos-removal work. That State does not muck around. The Act provides that the fee for the issue of an asbestos-removal licence shall be $2,000. South Australia intends to get to the root of the problem. Asbestos is probably one of the greatest scourges that are affecting workers in this State. It has been neglected by many Governments throughout Australia. It is only recently, as a result of pressure from industrial unions, that action is being taken. It always makes me laugh when people criticise the unions. The unions are active not only in relation to increased wages but also in the matter of safety. The unions do a marvellous job in regard to industrial safety.

As I stated before, the Labor Party supports any improvement in industrial safety. The Opposition spokesman raised a number of matters. He pointed to the number of accidents that have occurred. The member for Bundaberg reiterated his comments. Labor Party members look forward to the day when honourable members can read the report of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs and find that no accidents, particularly fatal accidents, have occurred through lack of industrial safety. The matter is apolitical. All honourable members should strive to achieve safety in industry.

Mr YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (7.36 p.m.): I will not take up too much time. However, I am interested in industrial safety. I spent a great part of my life in industry, and I know the ramifications of lack of safety precautions on industrial sites. I worked on the waterfront. In the early days, some horrific accidents and injuries occurred. Over a number of years. as a result of the strength and arguments put forward

by the unions, the situation has improved and today the waterfront is probably one of the most safety-conscious areas in industry.

I, along with my colleagues, support any move to increase safety in industry, construction safety or otherwise. However, the Government is really only poking in the dark in respect to introducing new provisions when there is not and never has been sufficient manpower in the department to ensure that the safety provisions are enforced properly.

I draw to the attention of the House the report of the Auditor-General (Mr Craven) of about two years ago. At that time I read verbatim to the House a section of Mr Craven's report in which he stated quite clearly that approximately 1 500 construction sites in Queensland had not been visited by inspectors, because of their inability to cope with the work-load across the State. All and sundry would have to agree that it is an indictment on the department and on the Government that that situation was allowed to prevail.

The situation has not improved to any large extent since the time of that report. Although the new provisions will be introduced and, I hope, policed, the department does not have the manpower to police them fully. The Minister would need to double or treble his staff to police these requirements right throughout the State.

Over the period that this Government has been in power—approximately 25 years—Queensland's industrial safety record has been disgraceful, to say the least. It is only in the last decade or so, as a result of pressure, that the Government has adhered to the demands, not only of employers but also of employees via the unions, to improve construction and industrial safety generally.

I agree with my colleague the honourable member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis), who said that the numbers of hours lost in industry as a result of industrial disputes is insignificant in comparison with the number of hours that are recorded, not by the Opposition but by the Government Statistician, as having been lost.

I noted that in his second-reading speech the Minister indicated that provision would be made for private house-holders to obtain a permit for the demolition of their property.

The Minister should be cautious about what is entailed in issuing permits for demolition to private house-holders. Caution will be particularly important in the cases of demolition of old, wooden, high-set houses. Upon examination of the type of houses that are found throughout the State, and particularly in many of the provincial cities and towns in the northern part of the State, it can be seen that houses are built fairly close together. It is virtually possible to shake hands through the widows of adjacent dwellings. If demolition permits are to be issued to private house-holders, what will the prerequisites and regulations be? I hope that the Minister will elaborate on that, because if arrangements are permitted willy-nilly for the demolition of private property, the result could be very unsatisfactory.

In the Construction Safety Act, the definition of "construction work" reads as follows—

> " the term does not include the installation of telephone equipment, carpeting of floors, erection or maintenance of electric lines on poles, maintenance of electric lines on towers or laying of railway lines."

It is surprising that a wide section of the electricity industry is not covered by the Construction Safety Act. However, the Government, by employing contract labour, tends to move not only into the power supply industry, as in recent weeks, but also into the railways, and that trend has accelerated in recent years. The division of tasks that has taken place in the railways has resulted in the creation of the categories of electric lines and bridge work and other railway work. Presumably, contract work that has not been provided for in the terms of the Bill will be introduced by the Government. The Government has accelerated the level of contract labour, yet no provision has been

made in the Bill for that work to be specified. That is a contradictory feature of the legislation.

I ask the Minister either to explain or to elaborate upon what I predicted would be the attitude of the Government towards the Railway Department. The Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) has indicated on many occasions, both publicly and in the House, what the attitude of the Government will be and the projected course that contract labour will follow.

In conclusion, I reiterate that the Bill covers a vital aspect of the implementation of legislation generally and of protective measures for workers. I suggest to the Minister that insufficient manpower is available to carry out work, and provide safety measures. The Minister is kidding himself if he thinks that that is not the case. It is fair to say that in the inner-city area of Brisbane a construction boom has taken place. Quite apart from the aspect of what will become of all the office space and business houses that have been constructed, and how many of them will be totally occupied, it seems to me that the Minister is not keeping abreast of construction regulations that must be enforced and that the Minister and his department will continue to operate along the lines previously followed of not protecting workers and the community. By introducing the legislation at this stage, the Minister will ensure that it will lie on the statute-book without being implemented—unless, of course, the Government is prepared to allow the building inspectors to carry out their very necessary work.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (7.43 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate, particularly the honourable members for Bulimba (Mr McLean), Bundaberg (Mr Campbell), Gympie (Mr Stephan), Rockhampton North (Mr Yewdale) and Brisbane Central (Mr Davis). The debate has been quite a good debate because it has been conducted in what I believe is the correct spirit. All honourable members seemed to have one aim, namely, to provide a Bill that is applicable to the average person who works on a particular project. I notice that no-one has been critical of what the Government proposes to do, and that all honourable members who made contributions to the debate did so in a positive way. Perhaps all honourable members can learn from the exercise that has been undertaken in this debate.

I pay tribute to the officers of my department. Some of the duties that they have to perform are unpopular from time to time. However, all of the officers of my department perform their tasks with total dedication, with loyalty, and with the ultimate aim in their minds of providing and maintaining safe work-places and safe environments.

Approximately $120m a year is paid out by way of workers' compensation to people who are injured at their place of work. Obviously that concerns the Government and is one of the reasons why it is promoting Safety Week, which will be held in late May this year. I hope that departmental officers will be able to travel all over the State and hold seminars and other functions that will at least remind people that they have to be careful at their place of work. Although one cannot be absolutely certain of the results of such seminars, I hope that, overall, they will be beneficial. I think that we all tend to take accidents at work just a little too lightly. People tend to think, "It won't happen to me." But it does, and it is usually a tragedy.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: You will be speaking at the seminars?

Mr LESTER: I did speak at the Commonwealth Employment Seminar.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: I don't hold much hope for them.

Mr LESTER: My speech was quite well accepted. If the honourable member goes along to one of the seminars, he might be able to make a contribution. I hope that that contribution would have a little more depth to it than the uninteresting interjection that he just made.

The honourable member for Bulimba (Mr McLean) referred to understaffing. Maximum staffing is maintained within economic constraints, and no opportunity is overlooked to appoint additional staff and inspectors where necessary. A number of inspectors have been appointed fairly recently and, in addition, practices and procedures under the Act are constantly under review to maximise the time of field staff. In fact, one or two additional motor vehicles have been obtained, just to make their job a little easier.

Mr McLean: On that point, it seems strange to me that you can find extra money to sack people and extra money to bring in draconian measures in other areas, but you can't find it to save lives.

Mr LESTER: I just pointed out that additional money has been spent in this field of endeavour. The legislation referrred to by the honourable member was not my responsibility, so there is not much point in my answering his interjection.

The honourable member for Bulimba referred to temporary permits. It is a temporary permit, and nothing more, and will be issued only after an inspector has conducted a short oral examination to ensure that the applicant can do the work. Generally the permit would be issued only for a specific job, until the services of a certificated person could be obtained. For example, a temporary permit could be needed by a person operating in the bush. One hopes that such permits will not often be required, but it is a practical provision and will be available if it is needed.

The honourable member referred to the exemption of demolition work connected with construction work. Such an exemption would be given only in exceptional circumstances and only for a small job such as the renovation of a building requiring a minimum of demolition.

The honourable member referred to electric power lines and poles. The provision was inserted to ensure a demarcation between the Electricity Act, formerly the Electric Light and Power Act, and the Construction Safety Act. Reference is made in both Acts to the maintenance of electric lines on towers.

The honourable member for Bundaberg (Mr Campbell) referred to training in the use of lasers. I must admit that he made a valid point. Action is being taken to promulgate regulations based on the Australian standard for the use of lasers. A good deal of work in the use of lasers is going on in all States at the moment, and I understand that the TAFE colleges are looking at the introduction of training programs.

The honourable member said that the staffing of the Division of Occupational Safety was not up to current establishment. Appointments were recently made to fill the four vacancies to which he referred and, furthermore, additional positions were approved last year and this year, and they are in the process of being filled.

The honourable member discussed prosecutions for breaches relating to shoring in trenches. Queensland and the other States have been concerned about this problem on a number of occasions. Despite all the policing in the world, a person will not be prevented from trying to take short-cuts. The number of prosecutions is not necessarily a measure of the total activities of the Division of Occupational Safety. Much continuing work is done on inspecting, advising and training to promote safer working conditions. From time to time demonstration shoring exercises are held. My officers are available at all times to help people. Unfortunately, people do not always avail themselves of that help. Usually those who do so are the ones who do not really need help because they always take the utmost safety precautions. We are back to trying to catch up with those who try to take short-cuts. I wish that people would be more responsible. People even go into unshored places after rain. That is beyond my comprehension.

I was very pleased to hear the comments of the honourable member for Gympie. He made a fine contribution on several aspects of the Bill and in support of the need to introduce it.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central spoke about safety matters. He, too, claimed that, from time to time, the Act was not policed as well as it should be and that the necessary staffing was not available. Occasionally, he strayed from the subject, but I believe that he tried to make a reasonable contribution. Certainly he showed the right spirit.

The honourable member for Rockhampton North has a specific interest in a number of safety areas. He has always been very interested in these matters. He made a number of points. I will write to him in detail concerning the matters that he raised because, at this time, I may not be able to give them full coverage.

I thank all honourable members for the spirit in which they entered the debate. I am sure that they have learnt something from it.

Motion (Mr Lester) agreed to.

Committee

Mr Randell (Mirani) in the chair; Hon. V. P. Lester (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of s. 6; Definitions—

Mr McLEAN (7.55 p.m.): I seek further clarification from the Minister. In my speech during the second-reading debate, I said that certain people are not covered by the Act. I refer, in particular, to contract workers who are employed on linework and towerwork and also to contract railway workers who are employed on railway linework, including bridgework.

The policy of the Government is to let out electricity work on contract at an ever-increasing rate. It is important that the Minister explain more fully why those people are excluded from the safety provisions of this Act. It is quite obvious that the Government intends to move further into letting out private linework. Private contractors are renowned for not complying with the provisions of the safety code to the same extent as do SEQEB and the other electricity boards in the State. They do not have the training or the expertise in the safety area. They certainly will not spend money on safety training. I ask the Minister to explain to honourable members why those people are excluded from the Act.

Mr LESTER: Those people are excluded from the Act only because they are covered by the Electricity Act and the Acts that cover the Railway Department. It was felt that there was no need to include them under this Act. I shall take on board the points that the honourable member has made and will look at them when a further examination of the Act is made.

Mr McLEAN: Is the Minister saying that those people who work for contractors will be subject to the same close safety measures as are SEQEB workers and other workers employed by electricity boards throughout Queensland?

Mr LESTER: I understand that they are adequately covered by those other Acts.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—New s. 52A—

Mr McLEAN (7.57 p.m.): Once again, I put to the Minister the argument that I put in my speech during the second-reading debate. Proposed new section 52A (1) (b) states—

> ". . that a person of good repute who is not the holder of a certificate—"

and that refers to a certificate of competency—

"is nevertheless capable of performing and has sufficient knowledge to perform the work required and is available so to do . . "

Some of those people have gained expertise over many years. I refer to dogmen, explosive power tool operators, hoist-drivers, riggers, scaffolders, crane-drivers, etc. They are given a great deal of responsibility for safety on a building site.

When replying to the second-reading debate, the Minister said that an oral test conducted by an inspector, apparently over a few minutes, enables him to grant a person a certificate to do the job of, for instance, power tool operator, dogman, scaffolder or rigger. I do not believe that such an oral test over a few minutes would enable a person to go onto a job site and accept responsibility for the safety of all the men on that job. The Minister said that that provision is used only on rare occasions, such as in the bush. That is not good enough. The people who have the types of expertise needed to gain a certificate of competency cannot be plucked off the street. If the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs is honest in his intention to improve safety on building sites, he should give a more detailed explanation of this clause.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister suggested that this clause would apply on the odd occasion out in the bush. I would like to know on what other occasions it is thought that the permit will be obtained. What sort of a test will an inspector give a person who seeks a temporary permit to build scaffolding round a building site? The Bill does not say whether any restrictions will be imposed, such as on the height of scaffolding, for temporary permit-holders. Because inspectors will probably differ in their opinion of a person's competency, I invite the Minister to explain to the Committee and to record in "Hansard" the type of test that an inspector will set.

Subsection (2) of new section 52A states—

"(2) A permit granted under this section—

(a) shall be in force for the time specified therein; and

(b) while it is in force, shall be deemed to be a certificate of competency appropriate, according to its tenor, to the occupation specified therein but to no other occupation."

The second part of that subsection is quite clear. However, the first part, which states that the permit shall be enforced for a time specified, is very unclear. How long will the permit be enforced? Will it apply for an hour, half a day, a day, a fortnight, a month or a year?

Another question that I must ask is whether a person can go from job to job seeking a temporary permit for each job. That is not in the Bill. I ask the Minister to explain some of those points for the benefit of the Committee.

Mr LESTER: The clause is certainly not designed to allow a person to go from job to job seeking temporary permits. I would immediately crack down on that practice if I found out that it was occurring. Such a person would be using the system to engage in a type of business activity in which he should not be involved. My understanding is that the permit will apply only for the length of one particular job. Very special circumstances would need to arise before a person could get more than one temporary permit. Because the honourable member for Bulimba has raised this matter, I will make sure that the inspectors are particularly strict.

However, the Division of Occupational Safety has a responsibility to exercise a degree of common sense. From time to time, circumstances such as I have described do arise. The honourable member commented that every inspector might have a different viewpoint, and I do not disagree with that for one moment. I know that, when I did my scholarship examination, I did fairly well and some of my fellow-pupils suggested that the teacher who corrected my papers was easier on me than he was on them.

Mr Kruger: It was more good luck than good management that you did well.

Mr LESTER: Just between the honourable member and me, I point out that I am still ahead of him.

Mr Kruger interjected.

Mr LESTER: If I do not return to discussing the clause, Mr Randell may call me to order, and that would not do me or the honourable member any good.

I believe that the clause should be in the Bill. It must be remembered that specially trained people are not on tap in the bush as they are in the city. There is nothing more devastating for someone in the bush than not being able to obtain the services of a particular person. Such a provision must be built into the legislation.

The success of such a provision depends upon the competency of the inspectors. I am not able to tell the honourable member just how long an inspection test will be, because it will depend on the circumstances. It can be seen straight away that some people are competent and that they know what they are doing, so they are not tested for very long. Because others do not do such a good job, an inspector may be more suspicious and test them for a longer time. If an inspector finds that such a person is not up to scratch, he will not let him get through and he will not be granted a temporary permit.

The intention of the clause is that the permit will apply for one particular job over the shortest possible time. I do not want a practice to develop whereby permits are sought for successive jobs. If the honourable member has instances of that reported to him, or if he ever catches anyone doing so, I invite him to let me know immediately so that I can take action.

Mr McLEAN: Although I appreciate the Minister's lengthy explanation, I still have not made clear my point about the seriousness of the jobs that some of these people are doing. I can understand that at times in the bush it may be impossible to obtain a suitably qualified person. However, I do not see why the Bill should give inspectors an open hand to issue a permit at any stage anywhere in the State to, for instance, an explosive powered tool operator to go and blow holes somewhere. If he puts that tool into a wall which has nothing behind it, an innocent person walking down the street could be shot.

Because building workers put a great deal of faith in the ability of scaffolders to build a safe platform on which to work, I hark back to scaffolding. If, for instance, someone is given a permit for a short period to build a scaffold and someone else is killed as a result of faulty scaffolding, the responsibility can be fairly sheeted home to this clause. Under no circumstances should a person's life be sacrificed because a boss cannot get a qualified scaffolder to erect a scaffold.

Another example is that of dogmen's work, such as putting slings round big bundles of steel which are lifted 10 storeys high. Surely to goodness that is a skilled occupation. The lives of innocent people walking along the street should not be placed at risk because an employer cannot obtain a suitably qualified person for a short period. That is not quite good enough.

I am particularly unhappy with the clause. Although I understand the Minister's explanation and appreciate the honest way in which it was given, the provision in the Bill is not adequate. The Opposition would be very pleased if the clause could be reviewed to ensure that the type of people and the types of circumstances are specified so that the inspectors have some sort of standard for the granting of this permit.

Mr LESTER: I appreciate what the honourable member is trying to say, and his thoughts. I have to make it very clear that, unfortunately, all the legislation in the world will not prevent fatal accidents. From time to time the Government has over legislated, but that has not stopped fatal industrial accidents.

The inspectors should be competent people. They are trained and they are given special certification. I have to rely to some degree on their ability. Some inspectors are trained in scaffolding. Surely with their experience they should be in a position to know whether a person is capable of building a scaffold that is perhaps higher than usual. Some inspectors are familiar with the use of explosive powered tools. I would think that, if an inspector did not feel that he could issue a permit, either because he did not believe that the person could do the work or because the inspector did not think that he himself was qualified to do it, he would certainly get a second opinion.

Certainly I do not wish to change the legislation before the Committee, but I am happy to examine the clause that troubles the honourable member, who has made some good points. If he would like to see me on that matter we might sit down and have a talk about it.

Clause 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—New heading and ss. 57A to 57M—

Mr McLEAN (8.9 p.m.): New section 57D states—

> "Minister's power to exempt. (1) The Minister may, by order published in the Gazette, exempt a person or class of person or construction work in connexion with demolition or a class of construction work in connexion with demolition from the operation of all or any of the provisions of this Act either absolutely or subject to such conditions as the Minister specifies in his notification."

I ask the Minister to clarify that for the information of the Opposition.

Mr LESTER: Quite often the Government is criticised because the Minister does not have sufficient power to do certain jobs. I was very much involved with allowing people to go ahead and demolish the silos. At the time, some concern was expressed. I felt that if Queensland was to keep abreast of modern trends, it had to make moves into that area. The chief engineer expressed some concern to the people who were carrying out the demolition. He said that he would grant a permit to go ahead with the demolition. That means that, in the long term, Brisbane will have safer demolitions. Queensland was in a rut, and it was debatable whether the demolition with conventional methods would be safe. I do not need to refer to the many accidents that have occurred. I am sure that any Minister in my position, given certain circumstances, would like to possess specific powers that may be useful and helpful.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Lester, by leave, read a third time.

MOTOR VEHICLES SAFETY ACT AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 20 November (see p. 2745) on Mr Lane's motion—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (8.13 p.m.): At first glance, the Bill appears to be relatively simple. Basically, it transfers the administration of this Act from the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) to the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane). I assume that the Minister for Transport will be attending to hear the discussions on his Bill. I was somewhat surprised to find that he is not present in the Chamber.

Mr Wharton: He is here.

Mr CASEY: The Leader of the House had better round him up.

Mr Wharton: He is listening to every word.

Mr CASEY: At the outset, through the Leader of the House, I point out to the Minister for Transport, wherever he might be listening, that the Opposition supports the transfer concept, because it makes sense. The Opposition does not oppose that basic philosophy as expressed in the Bill. However, when such legislation is brought before the Parliament, it is necessary for it to be reviewed and examined by every member of this Assembly so that the problems that they encounter in their electorates can be brought to the attention of the House and so that the Minister, his departmental officers and anybody else who may be listening may take on board some of the requirements of such an Act.

Anything to do with motor vehicles is very important, because they are necessary to our way of life and involve almost every family in this State. When honourable members are examining legislation such as this they should look at its effectiveness and also at its method of administration.

I can find three areas in which very real problems exist. They are touched on in principles expressed in the Bill. The first relates to faulty motor vehicles, the second to roadworthiness certificates and the third to modifications. They are all fairly common in the community and are something that almost every citizen has something to do with at some point in time.

I think that most honourable members who have driven interstate would agree with me that the big difference between driving in Queensland and driving in other States is the number of bombs that can been seen on the roads in Queensland. Actually, it is a disgrace. Those motor vehicles are quite obvious. That is one reason why I criticise the way in which the Act has been administered by the department from which the responsibility is being transferred. That department has become very slack. Perhaps that is because of the great lack of trained and qualified inspectors employed by the Government, a criticism that the honourable member for Bulimba (Mr McLean) levelled in the previous Bill.

The growth that has occurred in other departments has not taken place in the number of officers in the Motor Vehicle Inspection Branch in this State. The growth has not been commensurate with the increase in the number of motor vehicles.

Bomb motor cars on the road are unquestionably a major cause of accidents. They are a major cause of traffic disruption. They slow down the traffic and cause problems. They are a major cause of high motor vehicle insurance premiums. I think that you, Mr Speaker, would appreciate that you and I and every other citizen in Queensland who looks after his motor vehicle in the proper way is forced to pay a much higher premium than should be the case because of the number of accidents involving motor vehicles that are bombs. Worse still, they are a disguise for stolen vehicles. That is a matter that I will touch on at a later stage in the debate.

In Queensland, faulty and defective motor vehicles and roadworthiness certificates are synonymous. They go together. Supposedly, the legislation will contribute considerably to road safety. However, it will not, because this State does not have as tough an inspection system or as many inspections as do the other States, in which both the police and the Transport Department are very tough in their clamp-down on motor vehicles.

Approximately 12 months ago I asked the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) a question about the number of full-time inspectors that his department employs to police motor vehicles Acts such as this one. The answer was 54 inspectors for the whole of Queensland! I am quite sure that all honourable members would agree that that number

is totally unacceptable. It does not allow for constant and frequent inspection of motor vehicles.

Unquestionably, the fear of having a motor vehicle put off the road pervades the mind of every motorist. It is only by having constantly on the road inspectors who are able to examine motor vehicles and, if they are unroadworthy, put them off the road, that road safety will be improved.

It is all very well for the Government to bring in amendments to the Traffic Act and drink-driving legislation. It is all very well for the Government to blame the drunks as being responsible for so many deaths and accidents on Queensland roads. However, there are a considerable number of contributing factors. Any ambulance officer or other person who frequents the scene of accidents knows that the other two major contributing causes of accidents are speed and defective motor vehicles. Recently, the RACQ—a very worthy organisation in this State to which most members of this Parliament and a considerable number of members of the public belong—made a statement that 6 out of every 10 motor vehicles in Queensland are unroadworthy. That club carries out more inspections of motor vehicles than any other organisation in Queensland, and the fact that 60 per cent of vehicles driven on the State's roads are classified by it as being unroadworthy should cause a feeling of grave concern amongst all honourable members.

That percentage of unroadworthy vehicles also indicates that the current legislation is not being properly enforced, and I note that no provisions that will ensure better enforcement form part of the Bill. The legislation that has been brought forward is only as good as the intention of the Government to administer its provisions properly. However, I am afraid that the transfer of responsibilities from one department to another will have no effect, because it will not result in more stringent and more frequent road testing of motor vehicles.

The Bill is similar to the legislation that introduced the breathalyser for the detection of drink-driving. The likelihood of an on-the-spot check by an officer of the Transport Department to ascertain whether a motor vehicle is roadworthy is a fear that should be instilled into the minds of motorists. If that could be achieved, perhaps motorists would be more careful and more willing to keep their motor vehicles in good and proper working order—not only for their own safety, but also for the safety of everyone else who uses the roads.

The motor vehicles that are not properly maintained are easily detected. Honourable members could go out onto the streets and easily detect them because noxious fumes would be billowing from the exhaust system. Obviously, such vehicles are burning too much oil so it is obvious that they are not being properly maintained. A person would not need to be trained or qualified to realise that that is the problem.

Some motor vehicles have more rust in them than metal. They can be noticed by anyone who wishes to observe them as they travel in the opposite direction or are parked on the side of the roads. Despite the efforts of shonky panel-beaters or backyard offsider entrepreneurs to patch the vehicles up, the signs of rust are clearly visible through the paintwork.

I am sure that all honourable members are aware of cases ferreted out by the electronic media which have illustrated the way in which backyard operators patch up motor vehicles and put them back on the road. The astonishing feature about those reports is that the vehicles have passed a roadworthiness examination and, in cases in which the vehicle has been traded from one person to another, multiple roadworthiness certificates have been issued that have enabled the vehicle to go back on the road, thereby evading the provisions of the legislation that is currently in force.

The maladjustment of headlights is a danger on the roads. I wonder how many members of this Parliament can certify that the adjustment of the headlights on their motor vehicles is checked in each and every year. Having its headlights adjusted will ensure that, when high beam on a vehicle is used, a visual problem is not caused for

the motorist who is travelling in the opposite direction. The honourable member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis) is a very cautious and capable driver, and I notice that he is the first to indicate that the headlights on his motor vehicle have been checked and adjusted. However, many vehicles have only one headlight and in some cases no tail lights operating.

Many of the old bombs on the road have wobbly wheels because the vehicle has a bent rear axle. In addition, improperly fitted tyres can be a danger when a vehicle travels off the bitumen onto the rough shoulders at the edge of the road. I point out that the roads in Queensland are in a shocking condition, and a tyre that is improperly fitted can cause an accident.

It is all very well for the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton) to be smiling. It is well known that the roads in his electorate of Burnett are among the worst in the State, and tyres that have been torn to pieces or shredded lie everywhere along the shoulders of the road. The Leader of the House should do more to ensure that the roads in his electorate are safe so that the next time I happen to be driving there, I will have a safer trip.

At times, when motor vehicles are driving towards me, it is possible for me to see that the steering-wheel is wobbling when the vehicle is being driven at speed, even on a perfectly smooth surface. That indicates that something is amiss at the tie-rod ends, the ball joints or, if the vehicle is of an earlier vintage, the kingpins. Noisy bearings indicate that a bearing is about to fall apart, seize or cause the locking of a wheel. That could involve either the person driving the vehicle or other people in an accident. Tragically, it is so often the case that some innocent person or motorist on the road is involved in an accident.

However, it is not only on the roads that defective vehicles are easy to detect; they can also be detected in the car-parking areas of major shopping centres. Honourable members should look round to see the number of motor vehicles that have defective mud guards. Because of the condition of the mudguards, when that vehicle encounters wet weather and muddy roads, mud is thrown onto the windscreens of other vehicles. In some cases the mud is so thick that windscreen-washers are unable to cope.

Most of the faults to which I have referred are quite easy to fix, but they contribute to more than their share of accidents. The fixing of such faults is supposedly covered by the Motor Vehicles Safety Act. If a proper system of inspection was introduced, people would be forced to fix those simple faults. In the car-parks to which I referred, one sees innumerable baldy tyres——

Mr Lee: Do you want all private vehicles inspected?

Mr CASEY: Yes, I do. I believe that all private vehicles should be inspected by a Transport Department inspector to ensure that they conform to the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Safety Act. Unless we, as legislators, introduce more stringent laws relating to road safety and the safety of motor vehicles, the road toll will not be reduced—the accidents that maim and cause so much loss of life and productivity in this State.

One sees vehicles with fluid leaking out of the brake cylinders. Obviously, the brake rubbers have perished and should be attended to immediately. If that is not done, one day the driver will stamp on the brakes and, instead of stopping, will go through a red light, hit some poor innocent travelling through on the green light, and another victim will be added to the road fatality statistics.

The problems to which I have referred are accentuated in country areas, and particularly in the electorate of Burnett. Queensland country roads are worse than those in any other State. One seems to see even more old bombs on country roads than in the cities. Only a few years ago, I saw a vehicle parked on the side of the road with one of its wheels at a very peculiar angle. When I looked underneath the car, I found that the suspension had been thrown away and the owner had installed in its stead a piece

of army webbing. The vehicle had hit a pot-hole and the webbing had collapsed. Is it any wonder? That car should never have been allowed on the road.

Unfortunately, a great many vehicles in that condition are issued with certificates of roadworthiness and then sold. The Government must really look hard at that practice. That is why some sort of system should be introduced to ensure that there is a continuing inspection of all motor vehicles. One can listen to people talking in bars or at football matches—wherever people congregate—and soon pick up the methods by which they are circumventing the legislation relating to certificates of roadworthiness. That circumvention is not just an odd occurrence; it happens each and every day in each and every city in this State. Some unscrupulous used car dealers thrive on that practice.

I do not intend to turn this debate into an attack on used car dealers, because a tremendous number of used car dealers in this State are honest and very strict in their practices and in the code of ethics that they follow. However, others are unscrupulous and will do anything in order to make a dollar. I will not cite one as an example, but today's "Telegraph" contains an advertisement featuring a photograph of a Fairlane ZJ sedan at a fairly low price. The number-plate of that vehicle has been blotted out. I wonder why, if it was not to prevent somebody being able to identify the year in which the car was manufactured. Only the model designation and not the year of manufacture is advertised.

One can go through most of the advertisements in today's "Telegraph", or in any other newspaper, and find that advertisers do not give the year of manufacture. They do that to try to deceive a buyer into thinking that the vehicle is a later model than it really is and thus get a higher price than the book value, although most people these days seem to know the book value of most vehicles. By practising that deception, a dealer might be able to sell the vehicle for $1,000 more than it is worth. Unscrupulous dealers engage in a number of other practices that I will touch on shortly.

The stealing of cars has reached epidemic proportions. Each year more than 100 000 cars are stolen in Australia. Most stolen vehicles are stripped for parts or dummied up and resold interstate. Most thefts occur in the heavily populated States of New South Wales and Victoria. Nevertheless, about 9 000 cars a year are stolen in Queensland, or about 30 to 40 cars a day. Unfortunately the clean-up rate revealed in the report of the Commissioner of Police is only about 25 to 27 per cent. Included in that percentage are the chassis and remains of vehicles that have been stripped for parts. Convictions for car thefts in Queensland are very few. The position throughout Australia is the same. All legislators must be very concerned about what is happening. With fast car-transporters, cars can be stolen and conveyed interstate overnight.

Cars can be stolen, stripped, have parts replaced, engine and chassis numbers dummied up, and then be re-registered in another State because registrations throughout Australia are not properly recorded.

Mr Davis: Because of their computer operations, Victoria and New South Wales have a higher clean-up rate.

Mr CASEY: They have a far better clean-up rate. Those States have moved into a few areas that I will deal with in a moment.

Queensland has become a dumping ground for cars stolen interstate. I am sure that virtually every member of Parliament has had a constituent complain to him about purchasing a motor vehicle legitimately, through a hire-purchase company, only to have the car repossessed because it has been stolen in another State. In those circumstances the vehicle has to be returned to the original owner, and the poor fellow is saddled with the hire-purchase debt and has to continue making payments of perhaps $220 to $300 a month for three years. Because he entered into a legal commitment with the hire-purchase company, he has to meet it. He has no recourse to anyone.

In Victoria a vehicle security register is kept. When people purchase a second-hand vehicle, they can get a guarantee that the vehicle will belong to them. I do not know

how the computer system works, whether it records engine numbers, chassis numbers, or make and model, so that a vehicle can be checked quickly to see that everything is above board. Queensland should have a similar register. The register of stolen cars should be a national one. When that system operates in all police stations, it will simply mean that the police in Queensland, who now have the facilities to trace cars stolen in Queensland, will have the facilities to track down cars stolen in other States.

For most people, their major purchase is that of a home. However, because of the high cost of homes and various other problems, more and more people are finding it difficult to purchase a home. The second biggest purchase for most people, and indeed the biggest purchase for some people, is that of a motor car to take them on holidays and backwards and forwards to the shops, school and work. The family car gets a lot of use.

Everybody dreams about obtaining a car. We all know that 17 years is the magical age for our children. At that age they can get a licence. The next thing that they dream of is owning their own car so that they can move around. Most people start with a second-hand car. Under the Victorian system, for $2 a buyer can obtain a certificate from the road traffic authority in that State verifying the ownership of a vehicle. That verifies that the vehicle is not stolen and is not wanted in another State.

In the purchase of a home, the big deal is not paying the builder or the man who furnishes the home but getting the title deed. Even though it may have a big mortgage stamped on the back, the title deed is a sign of ownership.

As I say, the second biggest purchase—or, for some people, the biggest purchase—is that of a motor vehicle. Unless a person buys a new motor vehicle from an authorised dealer, he has no guarantee that within two or three weeks, or even 12 months, somebody will not walk through his front door and say, "That motor vehicle was stolen in Melbourne 18 months ago. It does not belong to you. Lawfully, it has never belonged to you, and I am taking it back to Melbourne." There is nothing that the buyer can do about it, except continue to pay the hire-purchase repayments every month. The Government has to do something about that matter. It is just as important as roadworthiness certificates and the inspections that I have mentioned.

Earlier, I referred to the cost of insurance. The Insurance Council of Australia has estimated that more than 100 000 vehicles are stolen in Australia each year. At an average pay-out of $3,500 per vehicle, insurance companies nationally are paying out $350m each year on stolen motor vehicles. If somebody stole $350m from the Reserve Bank of Australia or from a number of branches of banks in Australia, there would be the greatest uproar that the nation has ever heard. Yet people blithely accept that stolen motor vehicles are costing this nation $350m each year. That is a tremendous amount of money. Somebody has to pay for it. Everybody in the community who insures a motor vehicle pays for it. The cost is added to the insurance premiums.

Queensland should introduce a motor vehicle register similar to the one that is operating very well in Victoria. A person buying a motor vehicle would be able to telephone the vehicle authority and immediately get the particulars of the vehicle. He would know whether he could obtain lawful title to the vehicle. That is something that we badly want in this State.

Earlier, I referred to modifications on vehicles. That is another matter that the community needs to consider. Regulations under the Traffic Act tie down the type of modifications that can be made to motor vehicles. Although a particular modification may reach an acceptable standard in Queensland, it may not be acceptable in Victoria or South Australia, and vice versa. Motor vehicles are very mobile commodities and can be moved across the nation in a matter of days. A standard across Australia is needed. The Standards Association of Australia should set such a standard, which can be administered in the same way in each of the States.

The standard required in Australia should be impressed upon manufacturers and importers, and motor vehicle modifications should be controlled at the point of manufacture

and import. In recent years a scare has gone through the community about certain mag wheels. Most young men like to make their cars look a bit lairy. In your day, Mr Deputy Speaker, you probably used to like to groom your horse's coat, mane and tail to make him look pretty. I am not trying to date you, Mr Deputy Speaker, but, in a similar way, a young fellow of today likes to have shiny chrome or nickel-plated mag wheels on his car rather than the dull painted wheels that come with the car when it is new.

Many people in retail business make a good deal of money selling car parts and accessories and many manufacturing businesses make a good deal of money producing them. Many retail outlets that sell nothing but car accessories can be found in the cities and towns of Queensland.

However, a big difference can be found between the types of accessories available. After mag wheels have been fitted in a workshop, the vehicle is taken to a police station or to the Main Roads Department for a roadworthiness certificate. However, on many occasions young people find that the modification that they have had fitted to their vehicle is disallowed in accordance with the regulations. If they try to get their money back from the retailer, or trader, they are told that the mag wheels are acceptable in Victoria and New South Wales, where they are manufactured, and that is why they are being sold in Queensland. When that happens—and it happens often—that is just too bad. Until the vehicle conforms to Queensland standards, it is put off the road by the police.

This Bill deals with modifications. In the review of this legislation, the Government should go further. A person may choose to put chrome mag wheels or some other modification onto his motor vehicle after it has been registered. Unless he is involved in an accident, he probably will not be picked up by the police for having a modification that does not conform to the regulations. With a constant inspection of motor vehicles, these types of unacceptable modifications will be discovered. On many occasions nothing is wrong with the modifications—in fact, some are quite good. However, a practical standard set by an authority that is acceptable to all States should be laid down. That is why I suggest that the Standards Association of Australia should lay down a standard. Once that happens, anything that does not conform to that standard cannot and should not be sold.

I know of a tragic case in my own electorate concerning a young man who owned a motor bike. He was killed in an accident at work and his distressed parents let the registration on his bike lapse. About nine months after his death they decided to sell the motor bike. The buyer took it along to be registered at the police station, where he was told that, because part of the bike was 2 cm too long and did not conform to the regulations, he could not register it.

The young lad had been riding that motor-cycle for four years and had re-registered it with the very same authorities on three occasions. Nobody had worried about the modifications. Because the registration had lapsed, the motor-cycle had to go to a checking station before being re-registered. Because a regulation had been put through in relation to new registrations, the motor-cycle could not be registered. It had to be altered greatly before it could be sold by the distressed parents. That is an example of the ridiculous regulations in existence.

I have no doubt that all honourable members are familiar with the problems created by the use of bull-bars or kangaroo-bars. Many of the bars currently on motor vehicles in this State should never have been allowed, because in many accidents they are a contributing factor to serious injury.

Nowadays, motor vehicle manufacturers design their vehicles so that parts of them crumple on impact. That absorbs some of the force of an impact and assists in preventing drivers from being impaled on steering-wheels and other dangerous objects.

Mr Lee: It doesn't stop the kangaroos out west, though, does it?

Mr CASEY: Bull-bars may prevent damage from kangaroos out west. I do not think the member for Yeronga has quite the same obsession with kangaroos that the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts expressed in the House today. The honourable member should not be making a comparison between a car hitting a kangaroo, hitting a person or hitting another motor vehicle and killing an occupant.

If it could be proved that bull-bars are as much a problem as I think they are, they should all be banned. Let motor vehicles be dented if they hit a kangraoo. If that saved even one life when a motor vehicle hit a person, it would be worth it. No value can be placed on a human life.

One type of bull-bar is made from fibreglass. It should deflect a kangaroo and not cause as much harm in the event of a collision with another motor vehicle.

Mr Davis: Some of the bull-bars that you are talking about do a great deal of damage when they hit a small car.

Mr CASEY: In these days of hobby farming, in an effort to dodge tax, people—mainly National Party supporters—purchase four-wheel-drive vehicles that they also drive in the city. I see them driving down the freeway with monstrous bull-bars on the front of their vehicles. I have yet to see a kangaroo on the freeway, so I do not see any need for those bull-bars. I have not seen many bulls, either, but I have seen plenty of bull-shippers.

Mr Davis: Bull-bars are a status symbol, that is all.

Mr CASEY: Yes, and that status symbol can become a killer.

Another provision of the legislation relates to heavy motor vehicles, so I shall take time to consider some of the problems experienced in the heavy motor vehicle industry in Queensland. I do not support the contention that one hears so often that huge motor vehicles are the major cause of accidents in the State. Statistics prove that only five per cent of motor vehicle accidents throughout Australia involve commercial vehicles, to use that fairly simple term to cover trucks, semi-trailers, vans and buses that are used commercially. The reason for that is very simple. Those who drive for a living are better drivers than the ordinary motorist. Most commercial drivers are far more capable of handling any type of motor vehicle on the road than the ordinary motorist in the community, who perhaps drives to and from work or who sometimes uses public transport to travel to and from work and drives his motor vehicle only at week-ends.

The recent national freight inquiry, which was sponsored by the Federal Minister for Transport (Mr Peter Morris), produced a document that is a good blueprint for the heavy vehicle industry of the nation in the future.

The system in Queensland, which the Government loves to call the free enterprise system, is running into many problems with heavy transport vehicles. Under the present owner-driver system, many drivers have inadequate capital and they are into hire-purchase up to the hilt. They have no liquid reserves and they have a lack of formal training in finance and administration. They are being played off a break by the freight-forwarders. All they know is how to drive. They must drive like the wind to meet deadlines. I welcome the Minister back into the Chamber. A great number of problems are created because the owner-drivers enter and leave the industry in an uncontrolled manner. They are undercutting one other. That is the way in which they operate. As I said, usually they are played off a break by the freight-forwarders with an offer of take it or leave it.

Because of the downturn in the Queensland economy and because of the low rates that freight-forwarders are forcing on owner-drivers, they are overloading to make a quid. Everywhere they are dodging the scalies at the weighbridge. The honourable member for Yeronga (Mr Lee) would know a little about this subject. Recently, in an area in central Queensland which is in the middle of nowhere, I took a short-cut from

one town to another. In front of me were three semi-trailers. It was obvious that they were taking goods from far north Queensland along the back road to the Melbourne markets. They were going down through the back country in Queensland——

Mr Lee: They told me you were showing them where to go on the back roads.

Mr CASEY: I knew a way to dodge a scalie or two.

The drivers were using the back roads to avoid the weighbridges because their vehicles were overloaded to the hilt. I know a bit about the transport game. I could see that the vehicles were well and truly overloaded.

In recent days I have seen a copy of a certificate from a Transport Department weighbridge station. It shows that the weight of some semi-trailers in Queensland is approaching 60 tonnes gross. The tare of some vehicles is between 19 and 20 tonnes, and they carry a payload of more than 40 tonnes. Those 60-tonne vehicles are massive and heavy. Even though they are driven by good drivers, when they reach a high speed they are like huge missiles. How often have honourable members driven past a semi-trailer travelling in the opposite direction and nearly been forced off the road, especially in a light car, by the wind displacement of the vehicle? As those heavy vehicles pass, vehicles travelling in the opposite direction are rocked by the wind. A hard look must be taken at that matter. Damage is being caused to the roads in this State by heavy vehicles. A system of maximum payloads is needed. It is all very well to say that those vehicles meet axle loading requirements or that they are not being overloaded on an axle basis. They travel in all types of weather. A wet pavement is like a sponge. A driver behind a heavy vehicle can almost see the pavement parting as it travels along. Under the Act vehicles are checked, but the legislation in relation to heavy vehicles needs to be tightened up.

I personally support the concept of a graduated driving licence. If necessary, some form of driver's apprenticeship should be introduced. An 18-year old with a provisional licence who can pass a test and have his licence endorsed to drive a semi-trailer with a 12 or 15-tonne capacity can get into one of those 60-tonne missiles and drive it down the road without possessing the experience required to operate such a motor vehicle. Licensing drivers on the basis of experience should be considered carefully. Drivers should graduate to a large vehicle.

As I said earlier, this is the only opportunity that honourable members have of reviewing fully some aspects of transport in this State. At the moment, what Queensland needs more than anything else is a full analysis of road, rail, sea and air transportation so that the cost effectiveness of each mode of transport can be worked out and the suitability of each method for carting goods in the various areas of the State can be established.

Admittedly, a few years ago, road tax was done away with in Queensland. The need for the owners of motor vehicles to contribute more and more towards the cost of the roads in this State was done away with. If it had not been for the good Federal Government now in Canberra coming to Queensland's aid and providing so much money for maintenance, the roads in this State would be in a shocking mess because of the small amount of money spent on them in the last 10 years.

In many ways, the abolition of road tax was a regressive step.

Mr Davis: That was another political ploy.

Mr CASEY: That political ploy is one for which the people of Queensland are now paying through higher motor vehicle registration. That is only one aspect of it.

Realistically, all forms of transport must be looked at. Last week, a debate on the railways took place in this Chamber. I and many other honourable members who contributed to that debate indicated the need to win back custom for the railways from the competitive, owner/driver, undercutting, cut-throat system that exists in this State.

All honourable members know about the problems that ANL experienced relative to sea-road transport. It was the Queensland Government, throuth the Railway Department, that took the trade away from that company and prevented it from remaining profitable through to the northern ports. Other changes have helped to aggravate that. Air transport is also becoming very important in western Queensland for certain types of cargo.

A full analysis is needed of all of modes of transport. That would require a proper inquiry to be conducted in this State similar to the one into road transport that has been undertaken recently on a national basis. It should be set up to work out where the Government can rationalise. In a country such as this, and, in particular, in a State such as this, it is very difficult— and I am the first to admit the problems that the Government has in this respect—for the more than two million people who live in this State to contribute the finance required to build the roads that Queensland needs over an extended period, to upgrade the railways in the way in which they should be upgraded and to pay for the necessary port facilities and even for airports. People in the western areas of this State know full well the problems experienced in meeting the cost of maintaining airport structures.

Queenslanders cannot afford to pay for the competitiveness that exists between the different forms of goods transport in this State. The problem must be faced sooner or later. An analysis must be undertaken. In that way, the Government can help to ensure that people know where they will experience problems relative to additional vehicles on the roads.

Motorists travelling in and round cities know where the trouble spots are. They dodge those areas in an effort to reduce the risk of accident. Exactly the same applies to the moving of freight and goods. One has only to look at what is done to ensure that trains are separated from motor vehicles on a roadway. One has only to look at the safety measures adopted at railway crossings where those two forms of transportation meet. Roads should be looked at in the same way to establish where goods should and should not be carted.

I will make some further comments at the Committee stage. As I indicated earlier, the Opposition does support the measure. However, the ALP wants the Government to take on board what I and other honourable members have contributed to the debate in relation to the administration of the department.

Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (9 p.m.): At the outset, I congratulate the Minister on his worthwhile contribution to legislation that has previously been passed by the House. The Bill is typical of the work that has been done by the Minister in tasks associated with the various sections of his portfolio. The Minister has gradually and steadily updated the legislation that was in the process of being enacted when this Government came into power in Queensland.

If honourable members would care to examine the Bill, they would see that it updates and amends quite a number of other Bills that have left loose ends that needed to be tidied up. If Opposition members wish to make interjections, they may do so; but I will ignore the interjections because I realise that Opposition members do not wish to make a real contribution to the debate, and probably have not read the provisions of the Bill.

I confess that I was bemused by the contribution made by the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey). At the outset of the honourable member's speech, he said that the Opposition regarded the Bill as fairly reasonable, and that he had no objection to its provisions. The honourable member then waffled on, in his usual manner, and gave a host of examples of grossly exaggerated problems that he foresees when the provisions of the Bill are implemented. The honourable member brought forward the exception and claimed that it was the rule, and his contribution does not represent the true position to which the Bill addresses itself.

The Bill deals with important aspects of legislation that govern road transport. It is not intended that the Bill will eliminate every single problem. The Bill is not meant to deal with all of the things that the honourable member for Mackay has spoken about.

Mr Kruger: Why not?

Mr McPHIE: The honourable member for Murrumba ought to know that it is impossible to legislate and cover every possibility. From the honourable member's experience in Kilcoy, he should realise that every possibility cannot be foreseen, and that is the case with legislation covering road transport.

Mr Borbidge: The honourable member for Murrumba was sound asleep during the speech made by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs.

Mr McPHIE: I had not noticed that the honourable member for Murrumba was sound asleep, but, because the honourable member for Surfers Paradise is more observant of proceedings in the House than I am, I accept that that is so. It is really what one would expect from members of the Opposition.

Notwithstanding that, the honourable member for Mackay raised a number of matters. I share his concern about motor vehicle legislation. However, I point out that the Bill attempts to address the problems that he has mentioned, and that is why I congratulated the Minister on doing a jolly good job.

During the last 10 years, I have travelled to all States in Australia and I have lived in four of them. I have been able to assess the road transport systems in States such as New South Wales. I draw the attention of the honourable member for Murrumba to the fact that in New South Wales, vehicles must be subjected annually to a roadworthiness test before the registration will be renewed.

Mr Kruger: What is wrong with that?

Mr McPHIE: Nothing is wrong with that, except in relation to brand-new vehicles, in which case the process seems to pander to an oversupply of civil servants who are an unnecessary burden on the tax-payer. If Opposition members would only examine the provisions of the Bill, they would see that the clauses are quite sensible. I will deal in detail with the provisions at a later stage.

I agree with the honourable member for Mackay that there are bombs on the road in Queensland, but I must point out that in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria, vehicles of that standard are also to be seen. When I visited South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, I saw bombs there. Legislative enactment in the States that I have listed did not have a deterrent effect upon the use of such vehicles. If additional legislation providing for more stringent regulations were to be enacted here, I doubt very much whether it would have a deterrent effect.

Very often the older vehicle on the road is declared to be unroadworthy because of its age, but it is frequently the case that the older vehicle is in a far more roadworthy condition than a vehicle which is comparatively new or only a few years old. Especially in the case of older vehicles, it is often not the vehicle's condition, but the nut behind the wheel who is causing all the problems. If a proper system of road-safety checking were implemented, such as the kind that the Minister has proposed, mechanical problems would not be the major concern. It is more likely that the person driving the vehicle, either because he had consumed too much alcohol or because he was unable to drive properly, would be the cause of the problems.

The Bill contains so many good things that it is a pity that the honourable member for Mackay could not have been a little more complimentary about it instead of waffling on giving one-off examples ad nauseum. I have travelled out west and seen plenty of examples of what the honourable member was talking about, including the bad driving.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr McPHIE: I have held a Queensland driver's licence for 40 years. How long has the honourable member held one? I have driven in extremely bad conditions, and I have seen a great many bad drivers. Conversely, I have seen a great number of jolly good drivers. I have seen a great many vehicles that have been well looked after and maintained. I have seen a great many drivers doing the right thing. The number of good drivers will be increased as a result of the introduction of some sensible checks.

Mr Kruger interjected.

Mr McPHIE: Opposition members will probably fall over backwards, but I must now agree with the honourable member for Mackay. He referred to the real problem of unscrupulous used car dealers. But how can they be controlled? The honourable member for Murrumba might have a good idea. He seems to have ideas on everything. A number of fly-by-night operators in the used car industry do a great deal of damage to the reputation——

Mr Davis: Most used car crooks are National Party members.

Mr McPHIE: I am talking about the good ones. I suggest that there are probably some pretty good used car dealers in the honourable member's electorate. There certainly are in Toowoomba. I am sure that National Party members are among them. It is the sharp operators who cause the problems. They are encountered in any industry or undertaking. The honourable member for Murrumba knows that. I am sure that he has seen them in the cattle industry. I know about them because my brother-in-law has told me about them.

Mr Eaton: We've got them in Parliament.

Mr McPHIE: The honourable member might know about that, but I do not.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to the problem of vehicles being stolen and reregistered. How does he suggest that that be prevented? The problem is partly dealt with by the Bill, but I do not believe that it is really fair for the honourable member for Mackay to use such specific examples of problems that he has encountered and expect them to be solved. I agree that the introduction of some sort of nation-wide exchange of information regarding stolen vehicles would be advantageous.

I realise the problems encountered by a person who buys a motor vehicle believing it to be clean and then, the next thing he knows, someone comes along and repossesses it. That poor fellow has been taken down by a sharp operator. This Bill cannot eliminate that problem, and I do not think that any other legislation will be able to do so.

Mr Borbidge: There are computer links between the various Police Departments.

Mr McPHIE: Not to the extent that I would like. Such links could be expanded, and I am sure that the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police will be working on it because it is so necessary.

Queensland has a great many authorised dealers from whom a used car can be bought. The other day my son bought a used car from a dealer in Toowoomba, because he wanted to be able to drive himself to university. I hope that he has bought a good car.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr McPHIE: I hope that he did not buy it from the honourable member, because if he did it will be lemon.

My son bought his car from a member of the Automobile Dealers Association of Australia, and it will be a beauty. The problem is that the Government cannot introduce legislation that will cover every possibility. That is impossible.

Mr Davis: I told you before that most used car operators are National Party supporters.

Mr McPHIE: I agree that most used car dealers probably are National Party supporters. Before the honourable member interrupted me, I was about to say that most used car dealers are honest, and they would be National Party supporters. It is the dishonest dealers that the Government has to worry about. The Government is concerned about the fly-by-night fellows, and we do not have them in the National Party.

Opposition members should look carefully at the provisions of the Bill. I do not think that the member for Mackay can have done that because he referred to specific problems. He did not deal with the good things that this Bill does. It improves control over inspection procedures in relation to commercial vehicles, and that is desperately needed in Queensland. The honourable member referred to some commercial vehicles not being very good, and that is exactly why the Minister has moved in that direction and smartened up the legislation that he inherited from the previous Government.

Major improvements have been effected in the inspection procedures for buses, heavy trucks and articulated vehicles. It is of significance that vehicles between four tonnes and eight tonnes can be inspected at inspection stations. The very large vehicles weighing over eight tonnes, which are often driven at excessive speeds on the highway, must be in good condition because of the inertia factors that come into play when the vehicles are being braked at high speed. They have so much weight and speed that they are hard to control. They must be mechanically perfect, and have to be inspected by Government inspectors. All honourable members know that when vehicles are not in a satisfactory mechanical condition, the consequences can sometimes be traumatic.

A certificate of inspection is essential. The fact that inspections are not an annual event in Queensland, as they are in New South Wales, may be attributed to the enlightened approach of the Minister for Transport. He recognises that brand new vehicles are put on the road only after stringent checks and therefore should not require to be rechecked simply to meet red-tape requirements. That is a sensible arrangement but, unfortunately, in certain places, bureaucracy is going mad.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr McPHIE: I point out to the honourable member that allowance is made for remote areas. It is very hard for people in the bush or in areas such as that represented by the honourable member for Mourilyan to bring vehicles in for inspection.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The honourable member for Port Curtis is not in his usual place. If he continues to interject from his present seat, I will deal with him.

Mr McPHIE: I was ignoring the honourable member because I knew that he was not in his right seat and had no right to be interjecting. For that reason I treated him with the contempt that he deserved.

The Bill makes allowance for people who live in remote areas where inspection facilities are not as good as they are in the more populated areas.

An Opposition Member: Are you talking about Crow's Nest?

Mr McPHIE: I am not talking about Crow's Nest; I am talking about remote country areas.

The requirements are not too rigid. They have been drafted sensibly and intelligently as is the case so often in legislation presented by the Government. Even in their worst moments Opposition members must agree that the Government has been doing much to improve the legislation by tidying up many loose ends.

The new vehicles that do not have to be inspected are covered by the endorsement requirements of the Australian Transport Advisory Council, which are right up to scratch.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to modifications. This important matter is covered by the Bill. The modification of vehicles, whether they be new or second-hand, is controlled. The major modification of cars is carried out for or by young people. They drive vehicles with mag wheels and wide tyres. They drive vehicles with tyres on the back wheels that are almost 10 times as large as the ones at the front. They are the sort of tyres that should be on vehicles driven at the speedway at Archerfield, but many young people drive vehicles equipped in this way on the highways. They are the menaces that we have to put up with. Such modifications are generally illegal. If the drivers were to check with their insurance companies, they would find that coverage does not extend to vehicles with illegal modifications. The Bill deals with legitimate, sensible modifications to vehicles to meet legitimate needs. That is surely worth while.

Mr Casey: Do you think that safety is worth while?

Mr McPHIE: Yes, and that is why the Bill deals with this matter. The safety factor is involved intrinsically. People will be allowed to modify vehicles to meet special needs and they will be checked to ensure safety. Surely that is what it is all about.

Mr Casey: Wouldn't you agree that wider tyres are safer than narrow tyres on curves?

Mr McPHIE: That is a broad statement. The honourable member is trying to throw Alan Jones, with his wide racing wheels, at me. Good, narrow tyres are far better than wide tyres that are not designed for a vehicle, are not in good repair or are not properly fitted. The honourable member for Mackay is engaging in generalities and is trying to trick me. I will not fall for that. I am sure that he will agree with me that safety is paramount, and that the regulations dealing with modifications are necessary. The Government wants to tighten up the regulations relating to persons who can carry out modifications and when they can do the work. Surely that is ensuring safety.

Provision is made in the Bill to appoint authorised officers from within private industry to certify the work. That applies to the ordinary day-to-day modification of a vehicle. Surely that is the sensible way to do it in this vast State, in which vehicles are likely to be modified to meet special requirements. The vehicles will not have to be taken to a major centre to be examined by departmental officers.

Another matter relates to roadworthiness certificates. If the honourable member for Mackay has read the Bill, he will know that the provisions relating to roadworthiness certificates remain virtually unchanged, except that greater controls have been provided. Surely that is a sensible move by the Minister. Because of human nature, abuses will occur, and there is no way in which the Government can legislate to stop those abuses, unless it refuses to allow a motor vehicle that is the subject of an inspection to be driven on the road again. The Bill provides that, when checks have been carried out and certificates that are not in compliance with the Act have been issued, authority to carry out roadworthiness checks may be cancelled. Again, that is a good plus for safety.

These matters were covered by the Minister in his second-reading speech, but that was before Christmas and honourable members may have forgotten some of the finer points in it.

The Bill deals also with the certification of motor mechanics. Authority to control the issue of motor mechanics' certificates is being transferred from the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs to the Minister for Transport. That is a sensible thing to do. Motor mechanics should be controlled by the Minister for Transport, and the Bill seeks to transfer that control. In no way does it denigrate the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs or reduce his responsibility in other areas.

An appeal tribunal is to be established to hear disputes concerning certificates and licences. The Government has provided for appeals in much of the legislation that it

has introduced. It ensures that there is no abuse of privilege. It also provides an avenue for redress for people who think that they have received the wrong end of the stick.

This is a lengthy Bill. In winding up, I wish to touch on a couple of other matters. Fines for breaches of the Act are sensibly being aligned with present-day money values. All honourable members would agree that the small fines of yesteryear are no longer applicable and that the amounts have to be increased.

Mr Price: The poor old truckies!

Mr McPHIE: If the truckies in Mount Isa do the wrong thing, they should be subjected to the same fines as the truckies in Toowoomba who do the wrong thing.

Mr Price: You are really getting into them.

Mr McPHIE: No, we are not getting into them. We are getting into the people who break the law. During the last week, a good deal has been said in this House about breaking the law. If a person breaks the law, a sensible fine should be imposed on him.

The Minister for Transport and the commissioner will jointly administer the legislation, and surely that is the way it should be.

When the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) was talking about his driving experiences in the bush, he spoke about the problems that he encountered because of the state of the roads. He was talking about old bombs of vehicles that dropped off the side of the road where it was breaking up, and he made a few points about the quality of roads in this State. Surely the honourable member would agree with me that the job performed by the road-making authorities throughout this vast State over the many hundreds of thousands of kilometres of roads, given the small amounts of money allocated, is a magnificent one.

I have been driving on Queensland roads for 40 years. Almost 39 years ago I was roaming free in Charleville, Cunnamulla and Quilpie and I know what the roads were like out there. There were no beef roads in those days. I have driven on the black soil of the Darling Downs and I have driven in Mount Isa. I have driven on the highway from Camooweal, and the windscreen was broken by stones that were thrown up by the stock transports. I do not know who owned those transports or who was operating out there then.

The problems faced by the road-making authorities are enormous. Opposition members should not blame them for the state of the roads, and they should give credit where credit is due. The money that is allocated to Queensland for its roadworks was an initiative of the Fraser Federal Government, which introduced the scheme long before Mr Hawke came to power and probably before he entered Parliament. Indeed, the Hawke Labor Government does not give Queensland a fair share of the money gathered by way of the road tax and petrol levy and provided under the bicentennial road program. I appeal to Opposition members to ask their colleagues in Canberra to increase Queensland's allocation. In that way the roads can be improved, and motor vehicles will perform better. I know that this Bill will be successful, and if Queensland's roads are improved, it will be even more successful.

Mr VEIVERS (Ashgrove) (9.22 p.m.): I am pleased to have the opportunity to follow the honourable member for Toowoomba North. It appears that he is one of the most experienced drivers in the House. He claims that he has been driving for 40 years, and my calculations make him 57 years old; but recently, he told me that he was much younger than that. If the honourable member is not 57 or older, he must have been included in the push-bike statistics. If he is younger, I sincerely hope that he did not drive in his younger days without a licence.

Mr Prest: He was defending Australia for many years; he was in the air force.

Mr VEIVERS: He has certainly been covering lots of territory in his speech tonight. He stated that he has driven in Victoria and South Australia as well as in Queensland.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North did not really come to grips with the importance of this Bill, and I venture to suggest that he did not take cognisance of what my colleague the member for Mackay (Mr Casey) said. This is a very important piece of legislation. As the honourable member for Mackay said, the Opposition generally supports it.

It is about time that the Government came to grips with some of the problems caused by heavy transport vehicles, including buses. The Government's legislation is very timely, and the Opposition supports it because of that. However, it could be suggested that the legislation is long overdue because road safety in Australia is a badly neglected issue.

One person dies on Australian roads every three hours. That is a staggering figure. I do not think that members of Parliament in this State, or, I would even venture to say, members of the other Parliaments in the Commonwealth of Australia, really have come to realise the significance of that figure, which does not record the great number of tragedies and injuries that occur or the unbelievable cost that society has to meet as a result of tragedies on the roads. The estimated annual cost to this country is $3,000m; Queensland's share in approximately $500m.

The member for Mackay mentioned that heavy vehicles are not responsible for a major portion of those statistics. I think he said that heavy vehicles were involved in one out of every six accidents.

Mr Casey: 5 per cent.

Mr VEIVERS: What is known is that the cause of one out of every two accidents is alcohol-related. However, the massive problem caused by faulty vehicles and faulty maintenance cannot be ignored. The Bill is an attempt to come to grips with some of the problems.

I draw the attention of the House to the fact that for too long the Queenlsand Government has ignored those problems. The Commonwealth Government has introduced new certification arrangements that will be implemented during this financial year. They will provide greater assurance that vehicles comply with national safety standards. The expenditure on that certification will be $2.4m, which will be recovered through the sale of compliance plates. That is one positive step that I would like to see the Queensland Government follow by way of complementary legislation and financial assistance.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister referred to the importance of and the emphasis that needs to be placed on the inspection and surveillance of heavy vehicles because of their capacity to cause the greatest degree of damage and injuries on our roads. I concur with that and support the clauses of the Bill that are directed towards that end.

The Minister said also that, to assist in the control of the inspections, it is proposed that the owner of a vehicle for inspection must forward a current certificate of inspection to the Commissioner for Main Roads before the registration of that vehicle will be renewed. That also is a step in the right direction.

Although the Bill displays some recognition of the problem, I should draw to the attention of the Minister what occurred in this State not very long ago when a truck that was banned from the roads in New South Wales because it had 36 defects continued to operate in Queensland. That information was supplied by the New South Wales ombudsman. After the truck was banned in that State, it was registered in Queensland. The allegation is that the defective prime mover was coupled to a trailer and driven to Queensland just before Christmas a couple of years ago. How can things such as that be allowed to happen in this State?

In July last year, before attending the Australian Transport Advisory Council meeting in Adelaide, the Minister stated that 30 per cent of long distance bus-drivers checked in the previous month had no log book, and that three buses did not not have current motor vehicle inspection labels. The Minister stated also that commercial vehicle squad officers on highway patrol had manned a check point at Childers at which 49 intrastate and four interstate buses were stopped. It has taken the Minister a long time to really come to grips with that problem.

How many honourable members have experienced difficulties with fast-moving, heavily laden buses and trucks travelling at speeds in excess of the speed limit? Sometimes I have been passed when I have been travelling at 90 to 100 km/h. The other vehicle has been travelling at about 120 km/h, sometimes fully laden and sometimes with canvas covers flapping. That aspect of road safety has been allowed to go unchecked for too long. It is about time that the Queensland Government, and, in particular, the Minister for Transport, examined the whole matter and did something about it.

The Federal Minister for Transport (Mr Morris) made some comments about the matter. He repeated the claim that truck-drivers are not as tough as the trucks they drive. That is one of the problems faced by our society. Some vehicles can be dangerous on the roads. The vast majority of drivers of heavy vehicles are responsible persons; but in the hands of an irresponsible driver, a heavy vehicle is a very lethal weapon. That is recognised by the Commonwealth Government.

The inquiry conducted by the Australian Road Transport Federation found that 47 per cent of fatal truck crashes involved vehicles in overtaking manoeuvres. That supports what I said earlier. Some vehicles on the highway travel far too quickly and, when overtaking other vehicles, can cause a great deal of concern to motorists, and also cause a number of accidents.

A report in the United States National Safety Council's brochure entitled "Today's Traffic", under the heading "Vehicle Inspections Save Lives", states—

> "Annual car inspections save hundreds of lives a year and are heavily favored by motorists, according to a study reported this summer by the New Jersey Institute of Technology. The institute conducted the study for the state's department of motor vehicles at a time when the state government was considering cutting back to inspections every two years or eliminating inspections entirely. The institute reviewed New Jersey motor vehicle statistics for the past 50 years and compared the inspection system to those in other states. The study found that the New Jersey inspections cut fatalities by 314 a year, reduce accidents by nearly 38,000 a year, significantly reduce carbon monoxide levels, and are cost-effective—saving motorists $2 for every $1 spent. A public opinion poll found that 84 per cent of the state residents questioned favored inspections and 57 per cent said they would favor inspections that would take 15 minutes longer but provide more information about the vehicle."

How important that is to legislation in this State, not only for ordinary cars but also for heavy vehicles.

The Institution of Engineers Australia (Queensland Division) issued a technical report entitled "Developments in Road Safety: Vehicle Factors" I draw the attention of honourable members to some aspects of that report.

Firstly, reference is made to roadworthiness and the fact that vehicles have to be checked out in a number of important respects. One important priority concerns brakes and braking performance. There are three critical features. The first is the stopping distance and the effectiveness of the brakes; the second is the stability of the vehicle under braking. The report states—

> "Commercial vehicles do not have adequate brake balance when lightly laden and this can lead to loss of directional stability under hard braking as well as a decrease in the efficiency of the braking system."

How many times have honourable members seen a large, empty truck travelling too quickly, the driver braking suddenly and smoke coming from the tyres and the stability of the vehicle being put under a great deal of stress? Of course, if any other mechanical faults are present in the vehicle, those faults are certainly exaggerated.

Apart from stopping distance, the stability of a vehicle when it is being braked must be looked at. Steering control must also be considered. In an emergency situation it is not uncommon for one or more of the wheels of a car to lock when the brakes are applied. Of course, that is particularly so in the case of a heavy vehicle, such as a big truck. When the front wheels of a car or a truck lock, frequently all steering control is lost. As I understand it, that is one of the major causes of deaths and injuries on the road. If inspections are to be made—and they are required under this legislation—that is one matter that needs to be looked at very carefully.

A faulty vehicle can cause a driver to experience extreme handling difficulties. Not only brakes and steering but also general road balance and control of a vehicle are dependent on the maintenance of the vehicle itself.

I will not talk about design and construction faults because, these days, most vehicle manufacturers come up with a very good product. However, honourable members should address themselves to that problem. The relevant Government departments should be aware that new vehicles need to be thoroughly checked by the retailer before they are put into the hands of a buyer. These days, most companies have a very good vehicle recall system. Quite often reference is made in a newspaper to a particular vehicle being recalled. Control of design and construction faults in motor vehicles is very, very good. The main problem is maintenance, control of safety equipment, operational faults, servicing and all that goes with them.

I draw to the attention of the Minister an article which appeared in the 20 November 1984 issue of "The Bulletin" about what is called the Skelton Emergency Stopping System. The article reads—

> "Eight years ago truck-driver Colin Skelton drove a load of rubbish to a tip. On his way out of the dump the ropes from his trailer's canvas cover caught under his wheels and brought him to an abrupt halt. Skelton got out and saw an idea that today promises to save lives and to yield millions of dollars in export earnings.
>
> Australian owned and managed Dunlop Olympic Ltd has just completed negotiations for Australian and international rights to the device that has become known as the Skelton Emergency Stopping System."

I will not go into the highly technical details of the system. However, it is certainly worth while looking at.

The honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) mentioned faulty motor vehicle parts such as mufflers, guards and hood racks. That is a matter of great concern to everyone. How many times have honourable members been on the road and seen a hood rack almost off the top of a car?

The honourable member for Mackay mentioned also the problem of too many trucks and vehicles having very large metal bull-bars on the front. I realise that there is a need for bull-bars in the western areas of Queensland, but far too many of them have been fitted to vehicles that are used only for city traffic. Bull-bars, or roo-bars, can cause a tremendous degree of damage—not only to vehicles but also in terms of injury to motorists and pedestrians. The Minister ought to pay attention to that aspect of the legislation as well.

I compliment the Minister for the legislation because it represents a step in the right direction. As I previously stated, I would be pleased to learn that the Minister intends to go further by instructing his departmental officers to examine the problems that have been outlined. The overall difficulties that are connected with road safety in Australia can be alleviated by improving standards of maintenance of vehicles that are used on the road. The maintenance of standards can contribute to a reduction in the

cost to the community in terms of lives lost and injuries caused, which are an everyday feature of modern sociey.

Mr COOPER (Roma) (9.41 p.m.): It appears that Opposition members support the legislation. In welcoming it, I address my remarks to matters that are of concern to primary producers and grain-growers. Over many years, the certificate of inspection system has been chaotic. Endeavours made in an attempt to obtain a roadworthiness certificate resemble a lottery system. Try as one might, it is extremely difficult to obtain a roadworthiness certificate. I will elaborate on this topic. I have personal experience of the difficulties encountered when one wishes to obtain a roadworthiness certificate. Many people I know have been placed in the same position as mine, and they have spent a great deal of money in getting a vehicle to a standard of roadworthiness at which it is ready for inspection. That standard may be reached fairly early in the year and it may be a costly exercise.

The next step in the process is to try to get the vehicle inspected. One finds that the inspector is far too busy and, although it is not his fault, he is completely snowed under. By harvest-time, the vehicle has to be put to use. Without any certificate of inspection, the vehicle has to be used on the roads, and, of course, it often happens that problems with law enforcement are encountered. Many people have been booked for driving an unroadworthy vehicle. I realise that the police have a job to do; however, a great deal of inconvenience is caused when the bookings occur around harvest-time.

Mr Davis: That is a good excuse.

Mr COOPER: The honourable member for Brisbane Central knows very little about the land and about farmers, and it is well known that he cannot stand farmers and graziers. Copies of the honourable member's speeches have been circulated all round the ridges, and the entire membership of the grain-growers organisations and primary producers organisations have received copies. If I were the honourable member for Brisbane Central, I would not set foot in my electorate, because the people will be ready for him.

I support the concept of compulsory inspections, as I believe most primary producers would. It is a case of one in, all in, and that is a principle that is acceptable to all. The legislation will cover all vehicles that are in excess of the four-tonne gross vehicle mass category. That weight represents the entire road load weight of a vehicle.

As I previously said, a difficulty has been encountered in obtaining an inspector to carry out an inspection on the vehicle. The Bill will go a long way towards alleviating that problem. I congratulate the Minister on coming to grips with that problem since the responsibility for proper administration of that part of the legislation has moved into the control of the Minister and his department. People in the rural community have waited a long time for improvement in this area of legislation. Opposition members might understand some of the problems I refer to if they knew a little more about the subject of the Bill.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr COOPER: I would not be bothered answering Opposition members except to say that two changes have been made that will alleviate the problems I have referred to in the availability and obtaining of an inspection. One improvement relates to the licensing of garages, which will be subject to very stringent control. Garages ought to be licensed because there is a need for more manpower and more inspectors, but strict control will need to be exercised. The licensing of garages, rather than the appointment of more inspectors, is a step in the right direction, because it will avoid the bureaucracy syndrome. If the licensed garages are properly controlled, the escalation of administrative costs involved in having vehicles certified as roadworthy will be avoided.

I recognise that the aspect of mateship is present in the move towards licensing garages. It may be that familiarity and mateship will be a disadvantage. For instance,

in small country towns, the local garage proprietor may be well known to most of the people and the mateship syndrome will need to be consciously avoided. In contrast to that, a person requiring a roadworthiness certificate may not conduct business with the local garage but may feel obliged to do so. People will be a little concerned about that, but I think the problem can be overcome. It is certainly a move in the right direction. The problem will also be alleviated by the fact that there will be a two-year interval between inspections, and that will also be welcomed.

Licensed garages will inspect vehicles of from four to eight tonnes gross vehicle mass. That will lessen the work-load of Government inspectors. It will be economical and will help clear the backlog of vehicles that have not been inspected to date. The usual procedure for vehicles over eight tonnes gross vehicle mass will still apply. Government inspectors will still have that job, but they will be able to do it a lot more easily because the load has been taken off them. They will also welcome the legislation.

I suggest, however, that there be a return to the system under which owners are notified, for a start, of their inspection date. They need to be able to plan ahead and not suddenly be told that very shortly there will be an inspection in town. They need to know at least a couple of weeks ahead. If they cannot be there, it is their responsibility to arrange a suitable time with the inspector. They will then have to attend at whichever place is convenient for the inspector.

In my area some concern is still felt over the proposed private inspectors, and it is my responsibility to mention that. However, because of the present lack of manpower in the department, they are necessary. I would like to see a return to the issuing of windscreen stickers. They are very convenient all round. They make it much easier for snap checks to be made. It is much easier for an inspector to check whether the windscreen sticker is current than pull a truck over and have the owner or driver go through the glove box and come up with the certificate.

The requirement of the presentation of a certificate of inspection prior to registration is logical, but problems could arise. A friend of mine had an experience similar to the one I had. It was not long ago that he had to wait for four months after his vehicle had been inspected before he received his certificate of inspection. So people could run into the problem of being inspected but not having received a certificate and thus not be able to have the vehicle registered. That problem will also have to be watched.

They are just some of the concerns I have. I have taken them up with the Minister, and I am certain that if they can be alleviated the system will work a lot more smoothly than it has in the past.

Basically, of course, country people are satisfied with the legislation. There will not be compulsory inspections in remote areas in the interim period, and that is only sensible. To try to cope with the vast areas of country Queensland would be a virtual impossibility, but snap inspections will be made and they will keep people aware of the problem. Certificates of roadworthiness for used vehicles will still be compulsory. In the interests of road safety that is a sensible move, because everybody knows that quite a few trucks on the road are pretty shaky.

I also support the move to allow the commissioner to approve other safety measures that he considers are necessary in the interests of road safety. They are certainly paramount. New vehicles will not be required to be inspected for the first 12 months, and that is sensible. The rigid Australian Design Rule standards will negate the need for an inspection, anyway. Vehicles are always under warranty for the first 12 months, and new vehicles should be in a good, safe condition.

The range of penalties is being increased. They have not been increased since 1972. It is fair to impose penalties, provided the inspection facilities are available and accessible. The penalty for a breach of the Act will be increased from $500 to $1,000, and the daily penalty for non-compliance will increase from $10 to $25. That emphasises the concept of this legislation, which is really a carrot and stick approach. Most primary producers

do want inspection, anyway. They also believe that inspections should be fair and applied equally to all. They did not like the old roulette system.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr COOPER: The facilities have not been adequate up till now.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr COOPER: I have said enough to the honourable member. I welcome his interjections. The people out in the bush love to see the words "Davis ALP" I circulate the honourable member's speeches to all my branches, so I hope that he keeps coming right on in. His comments just make my seat a lot safer.

I turn once again to licensed garages. They will continue in the same way to issue certificates of roadworthiness. They will have to carry an extra work-load if they are licensed to carry out machinery inspections. The job will have to be done properly and officers of the Department of Transport will be monitoring activities closely. If they do not do a satisfactory job, their licence to carry out machinery inspections and the licence to do roadworthiness inspections will be cancelled forthwith. That tough requirement will be necessary to ensure compliance with the Act and to prevent underhand practices.

The issuing of certificates for motor mechanics is to be transferred from the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs to the Department of Transport. That, again, should simplify matters. Any procedure involving two departments creates considerable confusion and delay. Responsibility will be narrowed because that will come under the Motor Vehicles Safety Act. The commissioner, rather than a board of examiners, will be responsible for approving certificates. That will lessen the red tape.

An appeals tribunal is provided for. This is a right and proper innovation. The tribunal will adjudicate on disputes relative to licences and certificates. In the same way as other tribunals, the tribunal will consist of a magistrate, a commissioner's representative and a suitable representative of the licensee.

I commend the Minister for introducing this legislation, which honourable members have been awaiting for some time. Although it is long overdue, it is a move in the right direction. Producers will learn to work under the legislation. It will certainly lessen their hassles. I also congratulate the Minister on being so successful in administering the Queensland Railways and implementing the recommendations of PA Australia. He has done a tremendous job. He has set an example for others to follow in the way of economics and efficiency.

Mr PRICE (Mount Isa) (9.52 p.m.): Recently, when I was talking about the northern railway line, the Minister did not give much credence to my representations. I hope I get a little more attention from him this evening. I join in the debate to make an appeal on behalf of the truckies of Queensland. Over the past 10 years I have seen the demise of the battler in the industry. I put the battler on the same footing as the ordinary worker in Queensland.

The trucking industry has become progressively tougher and tougher. In laying the cards upon the table, I should say that the trucking industry is the toughest game in the world. It is probably the most competitive industry and, in some ways, provides a loophole for private enterprise, private industry and the Government to attack one another.

Anybody who has enough money to put a deposit on a truck can enter the trucking industry. It is very easy for unscrupulous dealers to sell a truck, even with work attached, to a man who seizes the chance to get into the industry to make a few quick dollars. After entering the industry so quickly, these operators normally have to cut prices. That should be music to the ears of those in private enterprise. In doing so, they reduce the return to the industry as a whole. A fight then gets under way and gradually the whole

pack of cards collapses. When a new operator goes broke, he generally takes a few others with him. In the trucking industry, nothing is more demoralising for an operator than watching a newcomer enter the industry and then go broke while watching him go broke. That is really the story of the trucking industry.

Mr Lane: Were you in the business yourself?

Mr PRICE: I was in the business for 20 years.

Mr Lane: What do you think of private enterprise?

Mr PRICE: I am not a disbeliever in it. Is that new and refreshing for the Minister?

Over the years, the economics have got tougher and tougher. More and more regulations have been imposed on the truckie to "clean up the industry"—and I put that in quotes. The load has become too much and many truckies have fallen by the wayside. The regulations that are being introduced are probably required in areas such as Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Mr Lane: Did you fall by the wayside?

Mr PRICE: I certainly did fall by the wayside, and probably the happiest day of my life was when I got out of the trucking industry.

Some provisions in this legislation are cosmetic. The overregulation is forcing out the little fellow, the battler. The regulations are being felt the hardest in areas such as north-west Queensland—and again I have to be parochial.

Some leeway is being given in this legislation. If it is not possible to establish an inspection station in remote areas, spot checks will be carried out. For years, the people in the west have been subjected to spot checks, particularly from the scalies. It does not take long for the people to work out the pattern of the scalies. They even work out where the scalies stay. The people know their movements from the time they arrive in town until they leave. Lambs are even sacrificed. One person or two people pay a fine so that the scalies can do their job and leave. Generally, their time is restricted.

Recently, the Assembly passed legislation dealing with the carriage of dangerous goods. Last week a truckie telephoned me. He was really distraught about the legislation. He had attended a meeting at which the Government officers had instructed the truckies on how to comply with the legislation and how to modify their vehicles. He worked out that it would cost him $120,000 to outfit a vehicle to comply with the requirements of the legislation.

Mr Lane: What was he carting?

Mr PRICE: He was carting mixed loads, including fuel. He was a mailman. He went from property to property, serving the people who vote for the Government. He has been left out in the cold. He has to bolt his tank down or buy a tanker to carry fuel to the people. He cannot carry anything other than fuel on his truck at any one time. If he mixes the products that he carries, he runs into problems. That is the sort of money that these poor fellows would be looking at to outfit a truck to comply with the regulations.

The honourable member for Mackay mentioned drivers' licences and the regulations with which the truckies have to comply before they are allowed to drive heavy vehicles. These days some road trains cost approximately $250,000. Most of the men who own them are single operators and they generally look after their units. A company with two or more of those units runs into trouble when it tries to get capable drivers. Probably the people in the west suffer again. Most of the drivers who are settled are on the coast. The drivers in the west are more likely to be fellows who will not hang round for too long. They come along with a little bit of paper that says, "I have a road train licence." They hop into a truck, and the usual pattern follows. The drive shaft drops out between

Mount Isa and Burketown, a gear is missing or a tyre is lost along the road. A few weeks later the tyre may be found in the publican's back yard in Burketown. This sort of thing has a greater propensity to occurr in those areas than in the city.

As to drivers' licences—I have had the idea for many years that unions should be involved in the training of drivers.

Mr Prest: You can't use the word "unions" in this Parliament.

Mr PRICE: I am suggsting that the unions could be shown to be constructive even though the Government does not think that they are good for anything.

Unions could take over the training of drivers and license them in conjunction with the Government so that only drivers who held a particular classification of licence would be allowed to operate certain machinery. In that way the trucking industry would be one step further advanced in keeping costs down.

Mr Lee: What can a union do towards it?

Mr PRICE: The unions could run the classes themselves. In that way they could protect their industry and ensure that the drivers are qualified.

Mr Lee: How could they teach them better than anyone else?

Mr PRICE: Obviously, private enterprise is not training them. The Government requires a person seeking a licence to attend a class given by an inspector at a country town such as Mount Isa. At the end of the class, what does a person really know about driving a truck, a road train or a semi-trailer pulling two trailers behind it? The inspector who hands out licences does not usually cover such aspects. Perhaps more classifications are required and drivers should be better trained. If the unions train drivers, the inspector would not have that responsibility, and a person seeking a licence from an inspector would already have a grading. That is a way of achieving co-operation between the Government, the unions and the industry itself.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North stated that complaints should not be made about the roads. Perhaps some roads in the Toowoomba region are in good condition, but, out west, they should be complained about. I do not think that enough bitumen roads can be found out west, and that causes problems for the small carriers, the truckies and the station-owners with their 4-tonne to 8-tonne tray trucks that travel from property to property. I take issue with the honourable member for Toowoomba North on that point.

Cattle on transports often choke to death because of the bulldust that is thrown up. Vibrations caused by the corrugations on the western roads cause damage to many of the cattle so that, if they make it to market, they may only be worth half of their true value.

Mr Davis: The member for Toowoomba North wouldn't know about that.

Mr PRICE: No. Of course, in Toowoomba they do not have any dust—it is black soil, which they are more likely to get bogged in.

I turn now to discuss inspection facilities in remote areas. I must admit that I smiled when I read the requirements contained in the Bill. The member for Roma spoke about the local garage-owner in the small towns but, in the west and the north west, inspection stations are not always available in suitable locations for the truckies. In Dajarra a single carrier unloads from the train and delivers to the local stations. He would not come within range of an inspection station. He is probably already on the breadline and he probably could not manage the imposition of making a trip to Mount Isa once a year for an inspection.

Log books are the basis of a great story in the trucking industry. For many, many years, despite the fact that truckies had to have log books, they were simply unknown

in the west. I would even take a small wager today that a person could go into half of the police stations west of Hughenden, ask for a log book and the policeman would say, "What are you talking about?"

Mr Casey: Plenty of logs but no books.

Mr PRICE: Yes, plenty of logs but no books.

Truckies make up a log book and have it ready in case they are subjected to a snap inspection. When asked, the truckie says, "Oh yes, I just haven't filled it out today, but there is yesterday's, but I forgot to put the date on it." There are ways to beat the checking of log books.

Mr Lane: Did you do that yourself?

Mr PRICE: I am giving the Minister an insight into the industry. If the Minister would co-operate with the industry the Government would end up with better legislation, and that might encourage the industry.

Mr Casey: I do not think there are too many rackets that you could tell the Minister about.

Mr PRICE: I forgot that he spent three years in that sort of territory, but I would question that he ever got anywhere near a truck.

The legislation also deals with new vehicles. Only last year I was made aware of a court case over a new vehicle. Perhaps the Department of Transport is aware of it. A brand new vehicle was delivered from probably the biggest manufacturer in Queensland and, within 90 days of delivery, whilst it was still under warranty, its bodywork was found to be riddled with rust. When those vehicles are being put together in Brisbane, many of the parts, both imported and locally made, are stacked on the ground in the yard waiting for use on the assembly line. Although generally they have the first coating of rust-proofing on them, that is not necessarily enough, as in this case. Obviously the rust had been painted over and, within 90 days of delivery, it came through. To get compensation—the owner ended up with a new vehicle—he had to bear the cost of the court case and take on that large company. If the Government is to rely on the new warranty regulations of manufacturers, how does it intend to get round a case such as that?

Another aspect of the Bill deals with A-grade motor mechanics, who probably know enough about machinery to be able to say that the wheels go round and that the engine pushes the wheels. They might even be able to say how a road train operates. Vehicles weighing between 4 tonnes and 8 tonnes usually have diesel engines. For the information of the House, I state that, on present-day costs, it is not economic to have a diesel engine unless a vehicle covers at least 40 000 km per year. It is mostly trucks that fall into that category, so that takes them out of the field of A-grade mechanics and puts them into the field of diesel fitters or a fitter and turner, who is used to handling heavy machinery and putting trucks back together. How does the Government think it can ask A-grade mechanics to be authorities on vehicles of that size and calibre? They can be provided with a list to check off, which is easy to do, but trucks get stress fractures and other things that motor mechanics do not usually look for in a motor car. Trucks are much larger pieces of machinery. Machinery tolerances are perhaps even finer in trucks than in motor vehicles. For those reasons and, as a sweeping statement, I question the ability of A-grade mechanics—I do not say all of them—to inspect trucks between 4 tonnes and 8 tonnes. The Minister must remember that truckies operate vehicles that are way out of the capacity of A-grade mechanics to imagine. Generally speaking, A-grade mechanics have not trained on vehicles of that size.

I am speaking both on behalf of the truckies and about western conditions, which I really do not think are understood by the Government. After the debate last year on

the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Bill, a Mount Isa truckie spoke to me and questioned the issue of permits.

He was actually handing the Bill over to the Cattlemen's Union for its inspection. It is having a late look at the Bill. I know that it is too late when the legislation has been passed. However, it is examining the Bill in view of what it is doing to the truckie in the west. It is having a look at it because it adds costs to the carrier and thereby adds to the cost of the cattle.

The Government is getting rid of the small carrier. The cost of having a large carrier will have to be borne by the cattle industry. Eventually that increased cost is passed on to the consumer. The small guys who operate trucks are being forced out of the industry; few of them are left. Having those little fellows do the mail jobs resulted in savings to the people in the cattle industry. They do the jobs from station to station.

If the Minister cannot handle the west with his legislation, all I ask is that he stay out of the west and leave it alone. It will develop. The south-east section of the State developed without all these regulations, but the Minister is introducing them into the west. I suggest that he should stay out of it and let the people there develop it. They will probably do a better job than the Minister.

I agree with most of the provisions in the Bill, and I hope that honourable members will support it.

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (10.11 p.m.), in reply: I have listened with interest to the contributions of honourable members to the debate. As usual, I have heard a list of anecdotes and local stories told to honourable members on the telephone or by people to whom they have chatted in pubs. Very few suggestions or comments were specifically directed at the Bill. However, one or two honourable members raised what, to them, appeared to be valid points. When the "Hansard" pulls are available, I will examine the contributions from both sides of the House during this debate and see whether anything can be done to improve the administration of the transport industry and for the community.

The honourable member for Mount Isa (Mr Price) has not been a member of this Assembly for very long. He seems to have appointed himself as the spokesman for the trucking industry and also seems to speak on behalf of the west—a large section of the continent of Australia in which I would not have thought he had any standing. Presumably, it reflects some vanity that he wishes to exhibit in this Chamber. I wish that he would give that nonsense away and confine himself to positive contributions that might be of some assistance to the community. I did get out of him that he was some sort of backyard truckie for a few years and that he made a few bucks on the side, no doubt by breaking the rules and regulations. Based on that experience, he wants to tell honourable members that nothing will work, because people like him can always find a way round the law.

Mr PRICE: I rise to a point of order. I find offensive the words that suggested that I was a backyarder. When I sold out, my business was Queensland-wide. Today, that business is still operating. I find offensive the words used by the Minister and ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): I ask the Minister to accept the explanation given by the honourable member.

Mr LANE: I accept the explanation of Mount Isa's answer to Sir Peter Abeles. As the honourable member came from a tough town like Mount Isa, I would have thought that he might have been a little less sensitive. If he has to react to every bit of teasing that he is given in this Chamber, I can assure him that his ulcers will get him before he develops into a worthwhile parliamentarian.

Mr PRICE: I rise to a further point of order. Maybe I am being over-sensitive, but I find that remark personally offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Minister to withdraw the offensive remark.

Mr LANE: I will withdraw it. The delicate little flower from Mount Isa cannot cop these things. Vic Moffatt is probably writing his speeches for him.

Mr PRICE: I rise to a further point of order. I find the Minsiter's remarks offensive. I spent 20 years out there; the Minister did three and ran away.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! A point of order is not an occasion for making a personal explanation. The honourable member for Mount Isa has taken his point of order, and the Minister has apologised.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. The Minister spent six years mainly outside Mount Isa in places such as Cloncurry.

Motion (Mr Lane) agreed to.

Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. D. F. Lane (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 22, as read, agreed to.

Clause 23—Repeal of and new s. 23; Owner of commercial motor vehicle to notify Chief Inspector—

Mr CASEY (10.16 p.m.): I wish to draw a few matters to the Minister's attention. Proposed section 23 (4) provides that "a new motor vehicle during the period of 12 months from and including the date when that vehicle is first registered under the regulations" is not subject to inspection.

I can foresee an anomaly arising. I do not want to go into the points raised by the honourable member for Mount Isa (Mr Price). However, there is a possible loophole in the Act that is well worth looking at. I refer to many vehicles that are used as off-road vehicles or are not registered. I cite mobile cranes as an example. I refer to vehicles that can get a permit to move. Vehicles that are used for construction work and are only on the road for short periods, moving from one job to another, are never registered. They are just moved on a permit basis.

This Bill should cover those types of vehicles even after 12 months, because they are being used and operated and are never registered. That is a loophole that may be used. I ask the Minister whether that has been taken into consideration. If it has not, will the Government take it into consideration as a means of ensuring that those vehicles will be constantly inspected?

Clause 23, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 24 to 29, as read, agreed to.

Clause 30—Repeal of and new s. 30; Inspection label—

Mr CASEY (10.18 p.m.): This clause deals with exemptions. In his second-reading speech, the Minister did not give honourable members an example of the type of vehicles that will qualify for exemption. Will it be on a location basis, as provided in the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act? Either way, will it be a permanent exemption or, once more, will it be on a permit basis so that it is applied for annually? The Minister might be able to give me answers to those questions.

Mr LANE: The honourable member for Mackay is well aware that Queensland is a large and diverse State the size of western Europe. It has peculiar geographical problems and problems related to climate, weather and seasons.

To manage this State at this stage of its development it is necessary that some sort of discretion be available to the administration to ensure that industry and commerce and the employment of people are not hindered by a word, a comma or some other minor amendment.

Mr Casey: Activate your microphone. Think of the Hansard staff.

Mr LANE: I do not see much point in answering the honourable member for Mackay if he is not prepared to listen to answers or explanations that I have given, which should be sufficient to suit him.

Clause 30, as read, agreed to.

Clause 31, as read, agreed to.

Clause 32—New Part and ss. 31A to 31E—

Mr CASEY (10.21 p.m.): Perhaps honourable members will not benefit from the co-operation of the sulky Minister for Transport in considering this clause. I was merely attempting to point out, for the benefit of all honourable members, that it behoves all honourable members to co-operate with the staff of Parliament House. I was endeavouring to indicate to the Minister that it assists the Hansard staff when the microphones in the Chamber are put to use. I realise that the Minister has a bull-horn voice——

Mr Lane: I do not need any lectures from the honourable member for Mackay on parliamentary procedure.

Mr CASEY: I realise that the Minister is rather touchy, and I am merely endeavouring to indicate certain procedures that are the format for debate in the Chamber. It behoves a Minister, when a Bill has been introduced, to be present during the currency of the debate so that he can make a note of the points made by honourable members and answer them.

Clause 32 is a rather lengthy clause, and to make things easier for the Minister, I direct him to page 16 of the proposed new section 31C (2), which relates to modifications. The necessity to obtain a licence or a certificate in the case of modification of vehicles if the modification is carried out other than in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications, or if the vehicle is altered or modified in any way, is the subject of that section. I point out that the term "modification" is not restricted to alteration in a mechanical sense; it can include modifications carried out to the exterior of motor vehicles.

The Minister has been to South East Asia, and he would know, for instance, that truck operators love to put ornaments on trucks. That trend is becoming apparent in Australia. One only has to pick up a magazine that deals with motor vehicles—I instance "Wheels" magazine, which is published each month—to find that modifications that are carried out other than in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications in terms of performance and appearance have become popular. I wonder whether the Minister envisages that such vehicles will be covered by the regulations that will be promulgated under the Act, and whether modifications will be allowed without the necessity of obtaining a certificate.

Mr LANE: The section that has been referred to by the honourable member for Mackay is one which prescribes the broadest discretion given to the Commissioner for Transport, not only under this legislation but also under other legislation that the commissioner is responsible for. The discretion is not limited or confined to ornaments or any other thing that the honourable member may have noticed on his visits to South East Asia. The discretion that is referred to in the section is a total discretion, and I feel confident that the commissioner will exercise such discretion responsibly and in accordance with the provisions of public safety.

Mr CASEY: In the same section, at the bottom of page 17, reference is made to the proposed new section 31E, which refers to cancellation, suspension and various actions that may or may not take place when a cancellation is effected. I make it quite clear that the Opposition does not oppose anything set out in the proposed new section, or the way in which it is proposed to be carried out. However, the Opposition feels that some indication should be given, either in the legislation or most certainly in the regulations, of the policy that has been enunciated by the Department of Transport or by the commissioner, specifying the period that must expire before application can be made for recertification.

The Bill states that authorised officers can appeal to the tribunal if their authority is suspended or cancelled, but there is no indication as to whether it is a lifetime suspension. If it is a lifetime suspension, that could in many respects be somewhat harsh on people who may be willing to toe the line in the future and properly look after their affairs. I am certainly not condoning anything they might do, but I believe they have to be given another chance. Perhaps the Minister could indicate what period it is envisaged will elapse before they can reapply or whether they can apply to anyone other than the tribunal.

Mr LANE: Where necessary, that period of suspension will be specified by the tribunal, as will be the time when the suspended person can reapply.

Clause 32, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 33 to 74, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Lane, by leave, read a third time.

PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION AND MARKETING ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 21 November (see p. 2880) on Mr Turner's motion—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr KRUGER (Murrumba) (10.28 p.m.): On the face of it, this legislation appears quite minor and not worthy of a good deal of comment. However, I point out that the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act is basically the Act which controls many of Queensland's rural industries. The Act is sound, but is often abused by this National Party Government. As I proceed with my speech, members will realise what I am talking about.

In early 1984 this Assembly passed legislation that reinforced the role of the Peanut Marketing Board in this State. I intend to refer to the constitution of the Peanut Marketing Board, which that legislation reinforced. The board's constitution states—

> "By the abovementioned Order in Council of 22nd August, 1924 The Peanut Marketing Board was constituted, to make peanuts harvested through the 1923-1924 season a commodity under 'The Primary Products Pools Acts 1922 to 1923' The functions of the Board have been extended until 27th February, 1989 by various Orders in Council made from time to time as shown in the following table."

I will not quote the table. It continues—

> "The whole of the said commodity at the time of the making of this Order in Council and all and every part of such commodity which shall be produced during the subsistence of this Order in Council shall forthwith upon the making of this

Order in Council be divested from the growers thereof and become vested in and be the property of the Board as the owners thereof.

. .

All peanuts the produce of the soil within any part of the State of Queensland, and produced or to be produced for sale for a period of ten years as from the date of this Order, are and shall be a commodity under and for the purposes of the Acts."

That constitution comes within the province of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act, and I will now relate it to the legislation before the Assembly.

The following is also provided—

"A grower shall not without the prior written consent of the Board remove or permit to be removed any of the commodity grown by such grower from the grower's premises, except for the purpose of delivery thereof to the Board or its authorised agent or for forwarding or consigning as required by subsection (1) (a) of this section.

Any person who is guilty by act of omission of any contravention or evasion of subsection (1) of this section shall be guilty of an offence against this Act and shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding $1,000."

The ordinance goes to great lengths in describing conditions under which it would be improper to sell outside the board. I am leading up to the problems experienced by this board under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. That legislation was reinforced by the legislation discussed in the early stages of 1984 relative to inspectors.

The section relating to inspectors reads—

" . . the term 'inspectors' shall mean and include any duly appointed inspector of the board or any member of the Police Force or any other person acting under lawful authority under or pursuant to the provisions of this Act. No inspector, and no person acting under the direction, or order or instruction of an inspector shall be deemed to be a trespasser by reason of any entry made or any act done under this section or under the provisions of this Act."

I am leading up to making the point quite clearly that legislation in this place is prepared with good intent. That part of the constitution of the Peanut Marketing Board has been recognised for many years, but people in high places in the National Party have seen fit, over the years, to try to perpetrate abuses that Parliament tried to prevent by passing legislation early in 1984.

The Peanut Marketing Board, in its annual report, said—

"All of the commodity peanuts within the State of Queensland is vested in the Board and the Board is charged with the responsibility of receiving, cleaning, storing, deshelling, grading and marketing the commodity."

That means that the total operation within the industry is controlled by the board, just as every other board under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act has control. The report continues in this way—

"The Peanut Marketing Board Levy Regulations were made under 'The Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act' on 26th May, 1927. This levy is a revolving levy, currently collected from growers at the rate of 1.5c per kg and is used to finance capital expenditure through The Queensland Peanut Growers' Co-operative Association Limited and for repayment of previously collected levies.

During the year, a Bill amending the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1983 was passed by Parliament. This Bill amended the principal Act, in the following main areas:

Termination of term of office of Board

Powers of affiliated body

Annual statement of account of a Board and
Minister's directions
Audit of accounts
Annual report of Board
Annual General of Meeting of growers
Annual report of Director of Marketing."

It is very interesting to compare that with what can happen with other regulations drafted under this Act.

In his report, the chairman of the Peanut Marketing Board said—

"At the time of printing this report, the total amount paid from the 1983 and 1984 season pools for legal expenses was $115,000. This amount covers all current actions, including the action against Tableland Peanuts and Others, Mr. G. A. Barron and Others and those growers who have not yet paid their seed and chemical debts owing to the 1982 pool. A contingent liability may exist if the Board lost any of these cases."

I raise those matters to illustrate how things went wrong when people influenced the intent of the legislation. I am interested also in how expenditure was incurred and whether the loans provided by the Government were expended as intended.

In a section of the report headed "Finance", the first paragraph of the "note" reads—

"Government Loan No. 1 relates to loans granted to re-finance their seed and chemical debts. The majority of these amounts will be recovered from growers."

Government loan No. 1 relates to loans given for the purpose of propping up the industry. Government loan No. 2 relates to the loan granted to increase the payment to growers for deliveries to the 1983 season pool. It all boils down to the fact that those people were covered by the legislation.

The Government's bad handling of the legislation has created some of the serious situations that have arisen within the industry. It is to be hoped that similar situations will not arise in other industries. Certainly, with interference from outside, anything could happen.

Since that time, various reports have appeared in the press about court cases that have followed the problems experienced in the Peanut Marketing Board. I wish to quote a couple of those reports to back up my argument.

On 13 December 1984, an article in "Queensland Country Life", under the heading "Win to the Peanut Board", stated—

"A Supreme Court decision upholding the validity of Peanut Marketing Board seed contracts appears to set back attempts by a group of North Queensland growers to trade their crops independently.

Mr Justice D. M. Campbell found for the board last week in awarding it costs in actions brought against a number of growers and an independent peanut processing operation.

Central to the Peanut Board case was the enforceability of seed purchase contracts which restrict farmers from selling peanuts produced from board seed to anyone except the board.

Board chairman Ralph Magnussen said it was extremely pleased with the outcome.

Mr Magnussen said the introduction of the contracts was also to counteract growers buying seed from the board and selling the production from that seed to outside operators who sold in competition against the board."

That shows clearly the intent of boards in this State under the provisions of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act.

A further article in "Queensland Country Life", under the heading "Peanut Board court action clarifies shellers' position", stated—

> "High court action by the Peanut Marketing Board should clarify 'once and for all' the legal position of the state's independent shellers, according to board chairman Ralph Magnussen."

An article in the "The Courier-Mail" was headed "Peanut Veto on NP President" It refers to the point that I really want to make. The Opposition supported the legislation that provided power under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act to sharpen up the peanut industry after the fiasco in which a certain gentleman went a bit berserk with the board's funds. The article in "The Courier-Mail" stated—

> "A meeting of north Queensland peanut growers passed an overwhelming no-confidence vote in the National Party state president, Sir Robert Sparkes.
>
> The meeting at Tolga on the Atherton Tableland on Monday night, voted 133 to two on the motion.
>
> The meeting was held to protest at moves by the National Party to allow private processors of peanuts to compete with the Peanut Marketing Board.
>
> Members voted 134 to one on a motion supporting the board's policies.
>
> The peanut industry has been beset by problems over the past two years, including major losses of grower funds. Last year, the State Government introduced legislation giving the board the right to acquire all crops grown for sale.
>
> This legislation included the controversial appointment of inspectors who had the power to enter farms to see whether a grower was selling outside the board to private processors.
>
> Since then, private operators have been lobbying to save their livelihoods and Sir Robert Sparkes intervened.
>
> A letter from the Peanut Marketing Board delivered to the Primary Industries Minister, Mr Turner, yesterday says: 'Following discussions with Sir Robert Sparkes, the board has been requested' to consider an alternative method of operation.
>
> 'Sir Robert Sparkes was adamant that independent shellers would not be forced out of business'."

That is in direct contravention of the intention of this Parliament under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. Early last year, that Act was amended to ensure that such problems did not arise; yet Sir Robert Sparkes, who is the leader of the National Party in this State, was prepared to go to any ends to ensure that the independent shellers received a free and equal go.

The article went on to say—

> "It was indicated that, if the board would not consider an alternative method of operation, the Government would take unilateral action to impose the objectives outlined by Sir Robert.
>
> Sir Robert indicated that his intentions were in line with the views of the Premier.
>
> Sir Robert said last night he had been too long in politics to be worried about 'inane no-confidence motions'.
>
> 'It is unfortunate that parties to this dispute have embarked on publicity at a time when there is some reasonable prospect of reaching a solution,' he said."

The solution had been reached earlier last year when the Parliament strengthened the legislation to allow inspectors to carry out the duties provided for under the legislation and under the constitution of the Peanut Marketing Board. However, Sir Robert Sparkes has interfered yet again. To my knowledge, his involvement in politics has meant intervening from above and laying down the law to the weak-kneed National Party members on the other side of the Chamber.

I turn now to an article from "The Queensland Graingrower" headed, "Joh says Government Firm on Independent Peanut Shellers". The name is spelt J-o-h and the article displays a photograph of the Premier, so I assume that the Premier is the person referred to in the article.

Mr FitzGerald: It is not talking about you.

Mr KRUGER: No, it certainly is not. I would not stoop to the low and miserable acts of this Government. The problems have been caused by the intervention of Sir Robert Sparkes and the Premier and Treasurer.

The article reads—

> "The Premier once again hit out at the Peanut Marketing Board yesterday asserting that his Government would not let independent shellers go out of business."

Who or what was he interested in? Was he interested in the legislation that was passed by the Parliament or was he interested in propping up a couple of independent shellers from his electorate? He took no interest in peanut marketing until Sir Robert Sparkes suggested that the independent peanut-shellers should be propped up. The Premier has fallen into line, and I can think of only one reason why he has done so. It is obvious that these peanut-shellers are well aligned with the National Party. I know that I have made a number of statements in the past that have not always gone down well, but I must say that Sir Robert Sparkes and the Premier and Treasurer have decided that they want the control of the industry in this State vested in the independent peanut-shellers rather than the Peanut Marketing Board, which the Government supported in legislation earlier last year.

Recently I threw out a challenge which, for obvious reasons, was not reported in the media by asking whether the Premier and Sir Robert Sparkes would back the independent peanut-shellers or whether they would back the legislation passed by the Parliament last year. I have not received an answer, and I would love to have one.

The article from "The Queensland Graingrower" continued—

> "Sir Robert Sparkes and senior vice-president of the National Party Mr Charlie Holm are currently continuing negotiations to find a suitable agreement between the two parties."

An agreement is not needed because the legislation is quite clear, as is the constitution of the Peanut Marketing Board. However, Sir Robert Sparkes and the Premier are interfering in an attempt to back up the independent shellers. I am aghast that the Premier and his National Party strongmen operate in this way.

I have raised these questions because every time a Bill to amend the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act comes before the Parliament, I wonder whether it will get results or whether those in top positions in the National Party will interfere.

I am sure that the Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Turner) must be thoroughly disgusted at the actions of Sir Robert Sparkes and the Premier, given the hard work that his staff put into the legislation that he brought before the Parliament last year. I ask him to stand up in this place and say that he supports Sir Robert Sparkes and the Premier on this issue. I would also like him to say whether he would support them again if, after this legislation is passed tonight, they interfere once more. I would like the Minister to clarify his position, because it is ridiculous that he and his staff do the hard work in putting the legislation before the Parliament, if interference is to come from people such as Sir Robert Sparkes.

In his second-reading speech the Minister said that the principal purpose of the Bill is to enable the Egg Marketing Board to change the basis on which it collects its administrative levy. I have already touched on the administrative levy relating to the Peanut Marketing Board. Every board has some form of levy, which turns the produce

into a commodity. The Minister said that at the present time the Act permits a marketing board to strike a levy on the commodity delivered to the board. The Minister used the word "commodity", and all honourable members know what a commodity is under an Act of this place.

The Minister said that the board now wishes to provide an alternative to the basis for collection of the levy so that producers can elect to pay the levy either on eggs delivered or on the basis of the number of quota hens held. The House recently debated the Hen Quotas Act Amendment Bill. I see no problem associated with that alternative. What I am concerned about is that the alternatives have to be the choice of the producer. It would seem to me that there is no great disadvantage, regardless of which way the producer chooses to go.

I am a little concerned at the Minister's statement that the alternative arrangements proposed in the Bill, combined with effective management by the Egg Board, therefore, are designed to reduce levy evasion and result in a more equitable distribution of industry administrative costs amongst egg-producers. I would like to think that no evasion occurred. I would also like to think that income and other taxes are not evaded.

It is odd that a Government can ensure no tax evasion in a case such as this—that is, no levy evasion—when political parties, with the exception of the Australian Labor Party, are prepared to sit back and accept tax evasion. If the Government is prepared to catch these little guys and make sure that they do not evade their levies, it should be going further in other fields. I realise that is not directly associated with the Bill, but it is worth keeping in mind.

The Minister also said that the saving in the administrative expenses associated with levy collection will enable the industry to become more cost efficient. The cost efficiency of the Queensland industry needs to be watched at all times. Last week the deregulation of the industry was mentioned. That would reduce prices in the short term. In this case the amount of variation would be limited and there would be no chance of a reduction in the price of eggs. Certainly any better method that can be used in any of these commodity industries to at least stop the price of the commodity rising—even if it does not reduce it—must be considered.

The Minister said that the system would simply provide producers with an alternative method of payment. I hope that producers are able to sort out what is best for them. That may make it a little easier for them to remain viable. As honourable members know, some very big egg-producers are operating in the State. The not-so-big producers should be considering the best methods available to them.

The Minister went on to say that the levy amendments have the support of the egg industry. That sort of statement is often made in the House by nearly every Minister when introducing legislation. However, recently I have found time and time again that, although legislation supposedly has the support of the industry, that is not the case. As this legislation has been lying on the table of the House for some time, I have made some personal checks, and it appears that generally the industry does accept the provisions of the Bill. However, too often Ministers come into this place and say that the relevant provisions have been accepted by the industry and, when the Opposition checks up, it finds that they have been accepted only by a portion of the industry, usually that portion associated with National Party branches throughout the State.

Mr Menzel: You are like a gramophone record.

Mr KRUGER: What I have said is true. Because it does not seem to sink into the honourable member's thick head, I have to keep repeating it. What I am saying is 100 per cent correct. If the honourable member for Mulgrave would listen and do something about it, I would not have to keep repeating it.

Mr Underwood interjected.

Mr KRUGER: As the member for Ipswich West has said, the honourable member for Mulgrave sent the Babinda mill broke. However, recently he has been interested in the bypass road rather than the affairs of the sugar-mill of which he was once chairman of the board.

I am worried by the Minister's statement that the Bill also includes a clause validating interest rates set or varied by the corporation since August 1974. That deals with loans from the Agricultural Bank and other lending organisations.

When validating legislation is introduced in this Chamber, one always wonders whether something has been done incorrectly—in this instance, since 1974—or whether it is a way of tidying up the Act. Problems have occurred in the past. Perhaps the Minister could explain what he intends to cover up by the introduction of this Bill.

The Opposition is reasonably happy with the legislation. In the future, I would like to see good, sound legislation introduced without interference from persons outside this Assembly. The time to interfere is when the legislation is introduced.

If the Premier and Treasurer intended taking the stance that he has taken in relation to the peanut industry, he should have opposed the legislation that was introduced. I ask the Minister to comment on that matter.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (10.51 p.m.): I support the Minister in his introduction of the Bill. I note that it has two main aims. The first is to enable producers' registration fees to be collected by a more efficient and cheaper method. I understand that registration fees were levied on the number of eggs produced, and that the proposed change relates to the number of hens owned. Recently the Hen Quotas Act Amendment Bill was debated in this Chamber. The good points of the egg industry were debated fully, and I do not want to canvass them any further.

The second aim of the Bill is of greater importance. Many industries throughout this nation are involved in the borrowing of money. However, some peculiarities exist in the borrowings of primary industries. To begin with, primary industries are capital intensive. I have stated before in this Chamber that to have a viable unit in my electorate a farmer needs about half a million dollars for the land alone, before purchasing plant and equipment. That being the case, it is understandable that people need to borrow large amounts of money.

I understand that, currently, banks prefer people to have about 60 per cent equity in their farm before it is regarded as being a viable proposition. That requires large borrowings. If a farmer has large borrowings, he needs a long time to repay them.

Take the hypothetical situation of a farmer who borrows $100,000, which is not a large amount of money when one knows that a header costs $150,000 or that a four-wheel-drive tractor costs $100,000. The interest on a $100,000 loan at 13 per cent is approximately $13,000 a year, or $260 a week. The redemption of a normal bank loan on many things is taken over five years. To repay $100,000 over five years is a redemption of $20,000 a year, or $400 a week. That means that interest and redemption is $33,000 a year, or $660 a week. If the same loan of $100,000 is taken over 20 years, the redemption is reduced to $5,000 a year, or $100 a week. The interest remains the same at $13,000 per year. Combined, redemption and interest over a long-term loan is $18,000 a year, or $360 a week.

It is important for that amount to be compared with the earning capacity of the property. I am talking about a fairly average grain-farmer in my area who grows 600 acres of grain. With an earning capacity of $80 an acre, his farm will gross $48,000 per year. Before tax, the $18,000 must be subtracted to meet interest and redemption, leaving only $30,000 to operate the farm, plant the crops, feed the children and meet other expenses. The figures I have quoted give the lie to what the member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis) would have honourable members believe, namely, that all on the farm is golden. There are no golden eggs.

Mr Davis: Could you quote the figures for leasing?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I cannot give such detailed figures. Firstly, the member for Brisbane Central would not understand them; secondly, the people in my electorate have read the honourable member's comments in "Hansard" As the honourable member for Roma (Mr Cooper) said, the people in the west are amazed that a person such as the honourable member could enter Parliament and try to be so knowledgeable about primary industries, yet so consistently put his foot in his mouth. He has shown his dislike and misunderstanding of primary industries.

The simple example that I gave proves that long-term loans are the only way that primary industries can survive. That brings to mind another problem that people are encountering these days—the volatility of the economy. When credit is being extended over a long period, decisions are very difficult to make. It is very hard to predict what the economy will do as the years go by.

I know of such a case affecting the application of a young person under the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme. This young farmer, born and bred on the land, put forward a case to the Land Administration Commission. He wanted to buy an 800 acre property valued at $500 per acre, a capital outlay of $400,000. The farm was right next to his father's farm. He had an agreement with his father that he would share his father's equipment and share the work over the two properties to try and make it viable. The applicant in that case needed to borrow $160,000.

If honourable members think about the figures that I quoted and what the repayments would be, they would appreciate that it was a pretty heavy loan to take on. The Agricultural Bank looked at the application. First of all, the bank officers thought, "This will be a pretty dicey one. It is a terrific debt to repay." They then started to think about the volatility of the economy, and they realised that, whereas a few years ago a farmer was making a living from 320 acres, the farmer now needs 600 acres. In 10 years, the farmer will probably need twice as much again, because the margin per acre is diminishing. So the Agricultural Bank officers had to say to the applicant, "You may be able to service it with a bit of difficulty and help from your father in the short term, but 20 years down the track you will find that that is not a viable area and you will be forced to borrow again to purchase an additional area when you have not paid off your original debt."

An Opposition Member: That is the third loan.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The honourable member would not understand; he gets money in his hip pocket every fortnight.

I hope that the examples I have given make people realise the nature of rural industry and how rural financing must be tailored to fit its needs. That ties in with the importance of primary industry to the whole nation. A large proportion of the national income is derived from primary industry. Of course, it is one of the things that Australia does best. As a nation, we should do the things that we do best, and give primary industry top priority.

It is in the interests of everybody—including people represented by Opposition members—that primary industry remains viable. The Bill goes a long way towards ensuring that it does. It attempts to make more efficient the setting of interest rates by the Land Administration Commission, the Rural Reconstruction Board, the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme and the Agricultural Bank.

I support the Bill. In years to come, I imagine that many people in my electorate will make use of this legislation.

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (10.58 p.m.): Suprisingly enough, I agree with many of the sentiments expressed by the honourable member for Condamine (Mr Littleproud). Today, primary industry has become a very capital intensive industry. This nation and

this State were developed on the success of primary industry and the pioneers who developed the State.

I am concerned that the Minister, in his second-reading speech, said—

> "The purpose of this part of the Bill is to simplify the method of fixing interest rates on loans made by the Corporation of the Land Administration Commission."

He went on to say—

> "As honourable members will appreciate, an important and essential aspect of farm reconstruction or farm adjustment lending is the ability to vary interest rates depending on circumstances.
>
> The present legislation requires the interest rate for each advance to be fixed by Order in Council, and this has caused administrative difficulties for the commission."

I take it that the Minister refers there to the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme.

If the track record of the State Government in the Rural Adjustment Scheme, as it is known, is looked at in relation to the various avenues that are open for help to be given to primary producers both young and more senior, the Government record is not too good. That is my concern, and that is the reason I rose to speak to the Bill. In the short period that I have been a member of this House I have had dozens of young people come into my office seeking help to get onto the land. I can say, without fear of agrument from Government members, that literally thousands of young people in Queensland are looking for help from the Government to assist them to get onto the land.

As I said earlier, primary industry has become capital intensive. It is not as it was in the old days, when a selection of land could be taken up and dairy-farming could be started immediately. Cows could be milked under a lean-to, and the farmer could sit on a stump to milk the cows. In some cases if a plough could have been obtained to work a piece of land, a few crops could have been grown. Today, in contrast to that, market pressures have meant that primary industry has intensified, especially when market conditions are tight.

Notwithstanding all that, the main problem seems to be that, whereas people are able to borrow enough money or they already have enough assets that will provide the collateral for a loan so that the farm can be established and can be progressed to a workable level, people are unable to service the original debt. That problem has evolved because of the high interest rates that are being charged. Many people, young and old, are unable to progress, for the simple reason that the original debt cannot be repaid. That is the reason that I speak in the debate today.

I also believe that the State Government could have played a more effective role in schemes such as the Rural Adjustment Scheme, yet it has failed to do so. Although the Opposition agrees with the text of the Bill, it is feared that the Government may not carry out the provisions of the Bill to the full extent of the stated intention.

I wish to quote an arrangement that operates in which the Commonwealth Government currently provides funds to the Queensland Government at the rate of 8 per cent over a 20-year period, with a two-year non-repayment period and a requirement for the State to repay only 85 per cent of the principal. In other words, the State Government is given a period of two years' grace, free from any payments, and the funds are provided at a fairly low interest rate.

What has happened is that the State Government has made the funds available on an ongoing basis, but at roughly the current bank interest rates, or at a rate of interest that is slightly below that charged by commercial banks at any given time. Although the State Government has received a two-year moratorium or non-repayment period, it has not passed on the benefit of low interest funds to primary producers.

I am concerned that benefits that would have been possible under the Commonwealth/State funding arrangement have not been passed on by the Queensland Government in an endeavour to assist new settlers to be established on the land through the work of the Corporation of the Land Adminsitration Commission, as the Minister mentioned in his introductory remarks. I am a great believer in Government's providing assistance to young people who are new settlers on the land.

I notice that another Bill concerning lands administration is listed for presentation to the House, and I hope that I will be given an opportunity to speak to that. More could be done by the Government in an effort to make land available to new settlers. In days gone by, when land was made available through either the Department of Primary Industries or the Department of Lands, the two departments worked in co-ordination. I have mentioned this matter before, and at the risk of being repetitive, I point out that new settlers had to qualify by ballot for a block of land. Before the ballot was drawn, in those days the Department of Lands and the Department of Primary Industries worked out what would be needed by way of funds to make the new settlement a going concern.

To illustrate the point, I cite an example of land that may have been worth £2,000 or £3,000 in those days. In today's terms, $50,000 would be needed to make the parcel of land a viable farming concern. Once the ballot had been drawn, the Agricultural Bank would immediately make a sum of money available when the land had been allocated. Once a settler qualified under the ballot system for a block of land, a simultaneous qualification was put into effect to make a successful ballot-holder a customer of the Agricultural Bank as well. That meant that an avenue of financial resource was also available to the new settler.

Mr De Lacy: All of the initiatives you have mentioned were Labor Government initiatives.

Mr EATON: That is right. That was an Australian Labor Party scheme. I was sorry that the scheme was abolished, because the State Government has not tried to build up or expand the operations of the Agricultural Bank, which was established for the sole purpose of providing assistance to the man on the land.

In the old days particularly, many National Party members and supporters received a start in life by provision of funds from the Agricultural Bank. The people I refer to went on to become very successful not only in primary industry but also as members of society.

When the Agricultural Bank could have taken advantage of an opportunity to expand—and I instance the brigalow schemes that were in operation—the Government did a deal with the commercial banks. The commercial banks proposed to the Government that new settlers would be well looked after, and that did happen. A great deal of money was lent by the commercial banks to develop the land, and that was a costly exercise. Having to contend with competition from the commercial banks, the Agricultural Bank over extended in an effort to keep pace. That factor is one of the major reasons why a credit squeeze eventuated, and also one of the reasons why the commercial banks have tightened credit facilities. The commercial banks are putting pressure on the primary producers and on the Queen Street farmers, or absentee landlords, as they are termed, who purchased land for investment.

The Queen Street farmers were able to sit back and wait for the increase in land valuation to come about, so that, upon reaching retirement age, they could sell the land at a vast profit. Such actions generated a false economy in land valuations, and young people are suffering today because of a practice that has been fostered by the State Government.

As an example of that—many primary industries are in trouble today because of pressure from the private banks. The banks talk about the hard economic times the country is facing, yet just prior to Christmas I saw in the financial pages of a newspaper

a list of the profits of the private banks. The first was Westpac, with a profit of $306m. This is in hard economic times! Next was the ANZ Group with a profit of $269m, with the other large Australian bank, the National Australia Bank, having a profit of $227.74m.

Mr Borbidge: Tell us about the return on investment.

Mr EATON: This Government encouraged those banks——

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I inform the member for Mackay that the interjection was directed at the member for Mourilyan. The member for Mackay will cease interjecting.

Mr EATON: The point I am trying to make is that many years ago this Government had the opportunity to expand the scope of the Agricultural Bank. I have said before that it should be modelled along the lines of the Western Australian Rural & Industries Bank, which is a very large bank that conducts a much more varied operation than the Queensland Agricultural Bank's. One often hears Government members saying that Queensland should have its own bank, and I agree with them. With the Agricultural Bank, this Government has a great vehicle to start such a bank. This Assembly should be all about legislating to provide the State's necessities, and it should have legislated to set up a Queensland bank along the same lines as the Western Australian Rural & Industries Bank. The Government could then have gone on from there.

In the latter part of his second-reading speech the Minister expressed concern about the financial problems facing primary producers, and I echo his concern. I hope that he can help many young primary producers. All primary industries are capital intensive. I could not agree more with the member for Condamine (Mr Littleproud), who referred to the financial problems faced by young people starting out in primary production. He said that many of them are given a lot of family help, perhaps from their parents or other relatives, but there is still a big load to be carried by those young people, particularly with the present high interest rates and the worry that goes with them. That is why I referred to the private banks. The Government could apply a bit of pressure in order to get them to carry a bit more of the load.

Just to deviate from the Bill for a moment, I refer to the pressures that are placed on cane-farmers by the private banks. Other members have had the same experience as I have had of contacting the Rural Reconstruction Board and going in to bat for farmers in trouble. I have tried to get them carry-on finance. However, one finds that, even if the farmers did not get the full amount for which they applied under the Rural Adjustment Scheme, immediately they received a certain amount as carry-on finance the private banks took it because the farmers had defaulted on loans they had with those banks. Because the private banks are taking RAS money as soon as the farmers get it, the farmers are receiving no relief whatever from debt. The only one who gets relief is the commercial banker.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr EATON: The honourable member will find that it is not very much below the current interest rate, and that is the point I wanted to make.

In the early days, if a person won a block of land or bought it through the Agricultural Bank, he was charged a rate lower than the commercial interest rate. Instead of expanding the bank and making it stand on its own two feet, the Government tried to put it on a commercial footing. The Government was borrowing money and then lending it to the bank, thus controlling the progress of the bank. It was not game to do away with the bank altogether, and that is why Queensland is faced with the problem mentioned by the Minister.

Mr Davis: If you go to a lot of banks these days, they send you to their hire-purchase company.

Mr EATON: That is right. The bank cannot lend a person the money at one table, but if he goes to another table he can get it at a higher interest rate.

The Minister also mentioned the Egg Marketing Board and the levies that it wishes to impose in order to try to help alleviate some of the problems faced by egg-producers.

The other Act referred to in the preamble to the Bill is the Primary Producers' Assistance Act. That part of the Bill relates to the Corporation of the Land Administration Commission. Another Opposition member referred earlier to this part of the legislation and said that because of the history of marketing organisations many primary producers are now greatly concerned about them.

One has only to look back over recent years at the activities of the Peanut Marketing Board and the grain-growers' organisation to realise why they are concerned. Sir Robert Sparkes and the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) attempted to introduce a little too much free enterprise into that area, and they frightened those primary industry corporations and co-operatives that are trying to do something to develop this State.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (11.10 p.m.): When dealing with this Bill, members should go back in time to see why the Act was brought into being. In doing so they will find one of the basic reasons for orderly marketing.

In 1922, Premier Theodore, in introducing orderly marketing, said—

> "Not only will they have that power, but they will have responsibility. Whenever power is given to any body, it should be prepared to take responsibility. I am prepared to give them power; but, at the same time, they must take the responsibility of what they recommend and must do the right thing in the interests of the farmers."

That is very important today because the Government has been lax about many provisions of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. It has not shouldered its responsibilities or acted in the interests of the farmers. Members should keep in mind what the Opposition shadow Minister said about the Peanut Marketing Board, and we must question the responsibilities of the members of that board and the Government concerning the scandal surrounding that board and whether action was taken in response to the farmers' requests.

In talking about responsibility members should consider the Auditor-General's report on the Miscellaneous Departmental Accounts for the year ended 30 June 1984. He said that the last audit of the accounts of the Barley Marketing Board was for the 1981-82 season and for the Peanut Marketing Board it was the 1981 season. It is not good enough when the Auditor-General is unable to do a full audit for five years.

Government Members interjected.

Mr CAMPBELL: Others have been done, but the man taking responsibility for the farmers' money was unable to do a full audit. The Government has been lax in this matter. It has also been lax in protecting the farmers. If a proper audit cannot be carried out, no-one can determine whether the farmers' funds are being looked after properly. Action should be taken to ensure that that does not happen in future. If it should happen the farmers cannot have trust in the Government or the boards.

In the Auditor-General's report on the Departmental Accounts Subsidiary to the Public Accounts, it is interesting to note what happened to the commodity boards between 1983-84. The farmers would not even appreciate that, from 1983 to 1984, the loans that the Peanut Marketing Board took up increased from $250,000 to $3.9m. Because the farmers' money is being held in trust by the boards, they should know why money is borrowed, at what interest rates, when it has to be repaid and which of the farmers are paying it back. Those are important matters.

In relation to the Queensland Government Development Authority Fund—under the heading "Commodity Boards", the principal of loans outstanding as at 1 July 1983 was $11.7m. By 30 June 1984 it had more than doubled to $29.1m. Yet the accounts

have not been fully audited. Where is the money going? Will it be used in the best interests of the farmers? It is important to know that, under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act, these boards are borrowing money and it is important to know whether it is being used properly. Some level of accountability should be put back into the Act to protect the interests of the farmers. I do not believe that that is being done at the present time.

The second part of the Bill deals with the Primary Producers' Assistance Act 1972-1976. In 1972 that Bill was introduced to provide for a State scheme supplementary to the main State/Commonwealth Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme to extend further assistance for the readjustment and reconstruction of the dairy industry. In other words, at that time the Government was prepared to set up a special fund to provide for the readjustment and reorganisation of an industry. The Government stated that it fully appreciated the contribution made by the dairy industry to the development of Queensland and its welfare and that it was conscious of the necessity to bring down legislation, such as the Primary Producers' Assistance Act 1972, to provide reasonably long-term, low-interest finance to dairy-farmers and to strengthen the industry generally. The Government found out that the dairy-farmers needed more assistance.

I now move to 1976 when further amendments were introduced. To readjust the industry, the Government looked at providing finance and assistance to dairy factories. In other words, in 1972 and in 1976 special legislation was introduced to help the dairy industry.

Mr Miller: What about 1985?

Mr CAMPBELL: That is what I am coming to. Another industry, the sugar industry, is in terrible trouble, yet the Government is not prepared to make a positive contribution to it.

Mr Menzel interjected.

Mr CAMPBELL: The honourable member for Mulgrave said, "We are doing something for the sugar industry."

In 1976, special amendments were made to an Act to provide for loans and assistance to dairy factories. But in 1983 and 1984, when the co-operative sugar-mills sought assistance, did the Government give them any finance or help? What it did was rip $10m from the Rural Reconstruction Board and give it to the co-operative mills as Treasury loans. That was a deceitful and shocking act. The Government then charged the co-operative mills an interest rate of 14 per cent. Most of that money came from the Commonwealth Government.

That is what has happened with the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. Previously, the Government was prepared to help farmers and industry by introducing special legislation, but that is not the case today. The Government deceives the farmers and the whole industry with its lies. The giving of those loans to the co-operative sugar-mills was an act of deceit. It is not the kind of act that the Government would have taken in 1972 and 1976 to help farmers.

Government Members interjected.

Mr CAMPBELL: It is up to Mr Hawke again. It is interesting that back in 1972 and 1976 the Queensland Government was able to take the initiative to help primary producers; but not today. Government members are always asking, "What can the Federal Government do?"

Mr Casey: They soon found the money to give to the peanut-growers.

Mr CAMPBELL: That is a very interesting point. It was marvellous how the Government could rush off and find another $3.9m for the peanut-growers. It has not been able to do the same for the sugar industry.

Government members always talk about the Federal Government. Nearly half of the total receipts in the last State Budget came from the Federal Government. Government members cannot say that they receive nothing from the Federal Government. The greatest proportion of receipts in any State Budget comes from the Federal Government.

To amend legislation, one must review it, and it is important in this instance to go back to the basic principles underlying the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. The boards have power and responsibility to act in the interests of farmers. They are very important principles.

Independent peanut-shellers have been discussed this evening. History has shown that if orderly marketing is to work, the entire product must be controlled. If free enterprise groups are permitted to take portions of the market in opposition to the board, one finds that those groups obtain all the benefits of orderly marketing that the statutory boards provide without making any contribution. Orderly marketing should be supported to the full or done away with altogether.

If the Government intends to do anything that is worth while, it should give consideration to treating the sugar industry in the same way as it has treated other industries that have been in trouble in the past. It should be prepared to make a positive contribution through legislation to help the industry.

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.21 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate.

The honourable member for Murrumba spoke about the value of the amendment to the hen levy. Producers who do not fully support their board add unfairly to the costs of those genuine producers who do. The Bill will correct that situation, and it will apply to the egg industry.

The provision has been adopted by the Government at the request of the two boards that represent egg-producers. I reassure the honourable member of the support of the egg-producers for this Bill. Egg-producers who pay their dues and support their board will be advantaged by the provision. Growers who bludge on the industry will undoubtedly oppose it. I point out that board growers may opt to continue to pay on the old basis if they so desire.

The honourable member for Murrumba spoke also, at some length, about the problems associated with the peanut industry. I remind the House that litigation is before the courts in relation to that industry. I point out that, as amended last year, the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act provides for a majority of the industry to move at any time to remove the board or to do away with compulsory acquisition. If the growers see fit, they may petition the Governor in Council so that a poll can be taken to remove the board. That safeguard is embodied in the legislation.

The legislation before the House is of a very minor nature. The honourable member for Condamine pointed out the severe financial liability that primary producers must enter into when embarking on the business of farming or when entering other fields of primary industry. Primary industry is a big business that involves high risks. The Government considers that the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act plays an important part in assisting the business of farming.

The honourable member for Mourilyan spoke about the administrative difficulties caused by the need for Orders in Council to be made for every loan granted. Interest on such loans has been set at rates from 1 per cent below to 3 per cent above the Agricultural Bank rate.

The honourable member spoke also about the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme. That is administered by the Minister for Lands under a separate Act of Parliament. I concur with the honourable member's comments about the difficulty that young people have in getting onto rural properties, given the astronomically high costs of setting themselves up on farms or properties.

The honourable member for Mourilyan raised also the argument relative to the interest rate applying to moneys provided by the Commonwealth under the Rural Reconstruction Scheme. As I explained this morning to the honourable member for Mackay, and to other Opposition members, Queensland is not making a profit out of rural reconstruction finance. This State is more than meeting its obligations under the Rural Reconstruction Scheme. I have asked the Commonwealth Government repeatedly to increase its financial allocation to Queensland under that scheme at a reduced rate of interest. As I mentioned in reply to a question from the member for Mackay this morning, that has been to no avail.

Mr Casey: Fair enough; but why did you charge the co-operative mills that high interest rate?

Mr TURNER: The contribution made by the Queensland Government to the sugar industry has been explained in the House on numerous occasions. During the same period, the ALP Federal Government has contributed only a small amount. Last year, the counterparts of the member for Mackay in Canberra took $76m by way of excise alone out of the sugar industry. How much of that has been returned to the industry? The Commonwealth Government is the taxing authority in this country. The honourable member for Mackay has had the matter explained to him on numerous occasions. The relevant documents have been tabled by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer and me, so it is hardly necessary for me to go into any further detail of the assistance that has been given to the sugar industry.

The honourable member for Bundaberg (Mr Campbell) made his customary contribution to the debate. As usual, he would get a B-plus for presentation and acting and a D-minus for content. He went back to 1922. It is a pity that he did not come back to 1985 and the amendments before the House, which relate to hen levies and interest rates. He spoke of nothing positive being done for the industry. He must have been joking!

I noted with interest the honourable member's comments about the role of the Auditor-General. The honourable member mentioned the absence of audited reports to this House on the accounts of the Peanut Marketing Board. If my memory serves me correctly, the honourable member said that there had been no report for the last five years. May I remind the honourable member that last week, while the honourable member was in the Chamber I tabled the annual report of the Peanut Marketing Board for 1984. That report contained the board's accounts for the year 1983-84, audited by the Auditor-General.

I again thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate.

Motion (Mr Turner) agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Turner, by leave, read a third time.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs): I move—

"That the Order of the Day be discharged."

Motion agreed to.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs): I move—

"That the Bill be withdrawn."

Motion agreed to.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs): I move—

"That the original Order for the introduction of the Bill be now read."

Motion agreed to, and the Clerk read the original Order.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs): I move—

"That another Bill be brought in founded on that Order."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Lester, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (11.32 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

On 14 November 1984, I introduced legislation into this House to amend the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. On that occasion, I informed the House that the Government had received numerous complaints of harassment of employees and employers at the work-place by officials and organisers of industrial unions. Most of these complaints concerned union membership issues.

The events of the last month or so have shown just how far unions will go to have their way. In the eyes of the unions, the rights of the individual and indeed the community at large are nought when they conflict with the philosophies of the unions. The events of the last month provide ample justification for all the legislation contained in the Bill now before the House.

For the benefit of honourable members, I draw attention to clauses 3 to 6 both inclusive, 9 to 12 both inclusive and 13 and 16. These clauses were contained in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill 1984 and are reinstated in the current Bill. My second-reading speech reported in Parliamentary Debates for 14 November 1984 (pages 2470 to 2472) sets out the detail of the legislation. In summary—

Clauses 3 and 4 cover the necessary amendments so as not to disturb the existing jurisdictions of the Industrial Court and industrial magistrates following on increases to various penalties throughout the Act.

Clause 5 of the Bill abolishes the requirement of 3 months' notice of resignation from membership of a union and provides that union dues payable will be limited to those due at date of resignation.

Clause 6 creates an offence against persons inciting or threatening an employee who has failed to participate in a strike.

Clause 9 of the Bill extends the secret ballots legislation to allow secret ballots where strikes are threatened in addition to ballots where strikes have actually occurred. It also provides that the number of employees required to request a secret ballot will be reduced from 20 per cent to 5 per cent of the number of employees engaged in the project, establishment, undertaking or calling, or 250 of such employees, whichever is the lesser.

Clause 10 of the Bill makes it an offence for a person to engage or threaten to engage in conduct prejudicial to an employee in his employment by reason of his membership of a union.

Clause 11 of the Bill prohibits discrimination against employees who are not members of unions or against employees who intend to terminate their membership except where a contract of employment requires union membership.

Clause 12 contains the penalty provisions in relation to discriminatory action taken against employees.

Clause 13 provides that recovery of fines, fees, levies and dues payable to an industrial union will be limited to 12 months.

Clause 16 of the Bill increases most penalties by 150 per cent.

Recent events have brought the definition of a strike strongly into focus. In addition to situations amounting to employees discontinuing their employment or failing to return to their employment, there have been many instances of employees working at reduced capacity. The definition of a strike in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act is fairly widely defined. It has been the subject of judicial interpretation over the years. It is proposed to redefine the work "Strike" in the Act to accord more fully with legal pronouncements.

A system of industrial conciliation and arbitration will only operate satisfactorily while the parties who operate within the system have a commitment to it. Industrial unions are a part of the system in Queensland and, to enable them to participate, they are registered under the Act. Upon registration an industrial union gains benefits and privileges that it would not otherwise enjoy. For instance, an industrial union of employees, upon registration—

attains corporate status;

can initiate proceedings for the making of an award covering the callings for which it is registered; and

has a right of entry into premises where callings for which it is registered are carried on and a right of inspection of time and wages records of relevant employers.

I have named only a few of the important advantages pertaining to registration.

It is only reasonable that unions should be deprived of these benefits when they fail to abide by the rules of the system, and particularly in cases in which their actions are in wilful defiance of an order or direction of the commission. Benefits may be withdrawn only by suspension or cancellation of the registration of the industrial union.

The Bill will make available an additional process to facilitate the deregistration of an industrial union when it has failed to comply with an order or direction of the commission.

The process will require an application to a Full Bench of the Industrial Commission for a declaration that the commission is satisfied that an industrial union has failed to comply with a direction or order of the commission. The application may be made by the Minister, the Chief Industrial Inspector or any interested person.

Upon such a declaration being made the Governor in Council may, at any time within a period of six months, by Order in Council order the registration of the industrial union to be suspended or cancelled—

wholly;

or as to one or more of the callings it represents;

and as to all or one or more of the areas or establishments in which such callings are carried on.

The Order in Council may specify conditions which the association of persons must comply with before it may be registered again.

Provision is made that, where the registration of an industrial union has been cancelled, it will be necessary for a declaration of compliance by Order in Council or an authority by Order in Council to be issued before an application for registration may be made. Provision is also made in the case of suspension of registration that an Order in Council cease to be in force at the expiration of six months unless extended by a further Order in Council for a further period.

To facilitate prosecutions for contravention of orders or directions of the commission in relation to strikes and lock-outs or in relation to mandatory or restrictive injunctions to compel compliance with an award, the Bill introduces additional evidentiary provisions.

In summary—

An industrial tribunal is permitted to take judicial notice of the existence of a strike or lock-out.

A presumption is created that failure of any person to comply with an order or direction of the Industrial Commission to remain at work or return to work is due to his engaging in a strike unless he shows to the satisfaction of the tribunal that his failure to comply was due to some other cause.

There will be a presumption that failure of a person to obey an order of the Industrial Court or the Commission is due to his wilful neglect unless he proves otherwise.

In proving incitement and counselling, it will be sufficient to prove the substance of a speech or statement without proving the actual words used.

It will be conclusive evidence, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that proof of publication of any speech or statement attributed to any person on behalf of an industrial union in a newspaper or broadcast by radio or television is evidence that the speech or statement was made by the person to whom it is attributed.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr McLean, adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Local Government Act 1936-1984 and the Local Government Act Amendment Act 1983 each in certain particulars and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Wharton, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House) (11.42 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

A number of important provisions are included in this Bill. They have been initiated largely as a result of the Government endeavours to ensure that the laws relating to the operation of local government in this State are kept under constant review. A number of the proposals contained in the Bill have been included as a result of representations made by the Local Government Association of Queensland, following resolutions agreed to at the annual conference of the association.

The other matters dealt with in the Bill have been discussed in general with the association, and I think that it would be true to say that the association is not opposed to any of the principles contained in the Bill.

I will now give honourable members a summary of the principal provisions of the Bill. First, it is proposed to make two amendments to the definition of the term "owner", which is a very important definition for the purposes of the Act. The owner of land is, of course, the person responsible for the payment of rates and is the recipient of various notices which a local authority is empowered to issue in relation not only to rating matters but also the whole range of other matters governed by the provisions of the Act.

The first amendment in this regard is to clarify that a lessee of land from a harbour board is the owner of such land for the purposes of the Act. This will bring the definition of the term "owner" in the Local Government Act into line with that in the Valuation of Land Act and will ensure that the lessee is issued with a rate notice in respect of land which he leases from a harbour board and in respect of which he receives a valuation notice from the Valuer-General.

The other amendment to the definition of the term "owner" is to provide that the company established for the purpose of managing a building which is time-shared will be the owner of that building for the purposes of the Local Government Act.

In respect of the issue of rate notices and other notices, under the Local Government Act and other Acts, such as the Building Act, the question of time-sharing of a building is a rather complex one from a local authority point of view. On a strict interpretation of the existing law, where a building is time-shared under a title-based scheme, each time-share purchased would constitute a separate rating entity for the purposes of the Local Government Act, and the holder of that time-share would constitute an owner. It will be appreciated that, under these circumstances, where there are a substantial number of residential units in a time-share building, the number of separate owners can reach rather large proportions. For example, in a building recently placed on the market for sale on a time-share basis on the Gold Coast, I have been advised that there could be somewhere in the vicinity of 6 500 separate ownerships when the building is fully sold on this basis.

The intention of the proposed amendments to the Act in this regard is to provide that the company which is required to be established under the company laws of the State to manage a time-share building will be regarded as the owner of that building for rating and other local authority purposes.

Where the time-sharing of a building occurs by way of a share-based scheme, there is no problem with regard to ownership, as the company in which the time-shares are purchased is the registered proprietor of the land and, therefore, is the owner for the purposes of the Local Government Act and other relevant Acts.

Later provisions of the Bill deal with the levy of minimum rates in respect of buildings which are time-shared by either a title-based scheme or a share-based scheme, and it is proposed in that regard to provide that the minimum amount of the general rate levy which a local authority may procure from land on which is erected a building of this nature will be comparable to the amount which a local authority, under the present provisions of the Local Government Act, may procure from land on which is erected a similar building which is the subject of a plan registered under the Building Units and Group Titles Act.

In the latter case, each lot on the building units plan is a separate portion of rateable land and subject to the minimum rate levied by the local authority.

In the case of the time-shared building, it is to be provided that the amount of the minimum rate levy will be the product of the number of residential units in the building and the minimum rate levied by the local authority.

I think it will be agreed that that is a reasonable provision, both from the local authority point of view and from the point of view of the owners of the respective properties.

Under the Local Government Act, a local authority may take out insurance cover on members of the local authority in respect of attendance at meetings or conferences or for the carrying out of inspections on behalf of the local authority.

It is proposed to extend this provision to provide that insurance cover taken out by a local authority in respect of a member may also cover the member when carrying out other official duties, such as attendance on his constituents on local government matters, or attendance at official functions as a member of the local authority.

Provision is to be made for the removal from the Act of the requirement for a local authority to obtain prior approval of the Minister before declaring a benefited area in respect of a separate rate to defray the cost of a particular function of local government.

Separate rates are used by a number of local authorities for equalising the rate burden in their area. It is considered that total responsibility in this area should be one for the local authority concerned and that the Minister should not be required to interfere in the exercise of this direction by the local authority.

Section 28 of the Local Government Act provides for the establishment of a Local Authority Debt Redemption Fund with trustees consisting of the Auditor-General, the Under Treasurer and the Director of Local Government.

The purpose of such fund is to administer sinking funds established by local authorities for the liquidation of sums borrowed by them on a sinking fund basis.

The Auditor-General is required under the Act to audit the books and accounts of the fund, and it is considered inappropriate for him to be a member of a body for which he is responsible as auditor.

The Bill therefore provides for the deletion of the requirement for the Auditor-General to be one of the trustees of the fund and for the Minister to appoint, in his stead, a practising local government clerk.

The Traffic Act presently provides power for a local authority to control trading on a road where the whole of the activity is conducted on the road. The Act does not, however, cover circumstances where trading occurs on a road from premises abutting that road.

An example of that type of trading would be automatic banking machines which are located on private premises abutting the road, where it is necessary for persons using the machine to congregate on the footpath in order to transact business.

That type of trading can, in certain circumstances, create congestion, and it is proposed to include a provision in the Act authorising a local authority to make a by-law and the Brisbane City Council to make an ordinance to control such matters.

At the present time, local authorities may issue on-the-spot penalties in respect of litter offences under the Litter Act, water restriction offences under the Sewerage and Water Supply Act, traffic offences under the Traffic Act and illegal camping offences under the Local Government Act.

It is proposed to extend the power in that regard contained in the Local Government Act to cover offences under by-laws dealing with the control of dogs where the local authority considers that the offences can best be dealt with by means of on-the-spot penalties.

The Brisbane City Council has recently made ordinances providing for the imposition of on-the-spot penalties for certain offences relating to the keeping of dogs.

The opportunity has been taken in the Bill to consolidate in the one section of the Act all provisions relating to on-the-spot penalty powers. The Bill provides that the Governor in Council may, from time to time, by Order in Council, extend the type of offences in respect of which on-the-spot penalties may be imposed. Any Order in Council of that type will be subject to tabling in Parliament.

Members will recall that in 1983 amendments were made to the Local Government Act to introduce comprehensive provisions dealing with the making of contributions by developers towards water supply and sewerage headworks where development proposals were submitted to a local authority, either by way of rezoning, site approval or subdivision. Those provisions have not as yet been proclaimed in force, primarily because of the need for local authorities to develop suitable policies for implementation under those new provisions.

At the same time, a review of the situation has been undertaken in the light of current practices in the development industry, and it is proposed to make some amendments to those provisions before proclaiming them into force.

Some of these amendments are only minor in nature, and are necessary to clarify the intention of the 1983 provisions.

The major amendment concerns circumstances where land is zoned for an as-of-right use at the time of the coming into force of the legislation and an application is subsequently made for approval to subdivide the land.

In such a case, the Bill provides that the headworks contributions obtained by the local authority will be confined to the construction of trunk mains and pumping stations or the augmentation thereof.

The effect of that provision will be that, in the circumstances referred to, the power of a local authority to obtain headworks contributions will be similar to that exercisable under existing law. It is felt that that is a reasonable provision, having regard to the fact that the developer has paid a higher price for his land where it is so zoned to enable him to carry out his development as of right.

There are a number of instances in Queensland in which, in respect of land in a particular local authority area, water supply and sewerage headworks to serve that land may be provided by another local authority, by a joint local authority or a board established for the purpose of providing that service.

Where this occurs, the local authority in which the land is included and which is the recipient of the services in question is required to meet its share of the cost of the headworks, and accordingly it is proposed to empower that local authority to require a developer to contribute towards that share of the cost in accordance with a policy fixed by the local authority.

Whilst on the question of town-planning—it will be recalled that, some time ago, provisions were inserted in the Local Government Act to provide that in those local authority areas specified by the Governor in Council land could not be used as a service station in combination with general shopping uses unless that land was included in a special facilities zone under the particular town-planning scheme wherein the only permitted use in that zone was for a service station in combination with a particular shopping use.

This matter has been further considered, and it has been agreed that, in present-day circumstances in developed areas, it is not desirable that the use of land for the combined purposes of a service station and general shopping could be permitted.

The Bill accordingly provides for a prohibition of such a use in those local authority areas or parts of areas as may be specified by the Governor in Council.

Provision has, of course, been made for a continuation of rights existing in respect of those combined uses which already exist or which have been approved by way of rezoning, or consent by the local authority concerned, and which are still in the process of being established.

Provision has also been made to permit the establishment of such a use after the date of the coming into force of the amending Act if a rezoning application to provide for that use is in train at the present time and is finally approved.

The Bill includes a number of provisions relating to the subdivision of land. Firstly, it provides that the prior approval of the local authority must be obtained where an easement is proposed to be granted to give access to an allotment on to a dedicated road under the control of a local authority.

Access easements have, in the past, been located, in certain circumstances, in such a position as to create a traffic hazard and it is considered desirable that, for this reason, they be controlled.

It is also intended to provide that prior local authority approval be obtained where allotments of land are proposed to be amalgamated.

The amalgamation of allotments can cause problems for a local authority because of disturbance to essential services and where a new parcel of land is included in different zones after amalgamation occurs.

In both the aforementioned cases, it is intended to provide a right of appeal for the applicant to the Local Government Court if he is dissatified with the local authority's decision in respect of his application.

Under the Local Government Act, a local authority, when approving an application for subdivision, may require a subdivider to contribute a portion of his land for park and recreation purposes or alternatively to make a monetary contribution towards the provision of public garden or recreation space by the local authority.

The Act presently provides that the amount of such contribution which may be demanded by the local authority shall not exceed $100 per allotment. This maximum amount was fixed several years ago. There have been representations that this maximum amount should be increased in line with the general increase in monetary values since it was fixed. We have decided to amend this Act to enable the maximum amount of contributions of this nature to be fixed by the particular local authority by by-law, thereby giving the local authority a discretion in the matter.

The reason for this is that the value of land can vary greatly from one local authority area to another, so that there should be some flexibility for the particular local authority to determine an equitable cash contribution required for park and recreation purposes.

The Government will still have the ultimate control in the matter, as any by-law made by a local authority requires the approval of the Governor in Council before it has force and effect. It will thus be possible to restrict any local authority which it is thought might be attempting to act unreasonably in this matter.

Certain other minor amendments are proposed to the rules contained in the Local Government Act dealing with the conduct of local authority elections.

The principal amendment relates to the rule that deals with the issue of a postal ballot-paper to a person who claims such a vote but whose name is not on the voters roll.

The rule authorises the issue of a postal ballot-paper in these circumstances where the appropriate declaration is made by the voter. The amendment relates to the issue of a duplicate postal ballot-paper in these circumstances where the voter loses or defaces his ballot-paper.

Under the amendment the duplicate ballot-paper will have to be set aside for separate custody for checking after the close of the poll.

The local authority has power under the Local Government Act, with the consent of the Governor in Council, to issue permits in respect of light tramways conveying goods or passengers across roads and bridges under the control of the local authority.

It is intended to include new provisions in the Act enabling a permit to be issued by a local authority in respect of the operation of a private railway across roads or bridges under its control.

This amendment is designed to provide for a situation in which the Commissioner for Railways proposes to grant a lease to the Queensland Railway Historical Society to establish an operating railway on part of the former Marburg branch railway line near Rosewood.

As part of this operation, the railway line will cross a road under the control of the Moreton Shire Council and it is considered desirable that the council should have the opportunity to control the standard of crossing and the maintenance of the crossing over such road.

In 1973, special legislation was enacted to enable the Townsville City Council to sell, for residential purposes, land in the suburb of Douglas which it had acquired many years previously for water supply purposes but which is no longer required for such purposes. The basis of such sales was that the land would be made available to first home-buyers only at a price sufficient to cover the cost of development and on condition that the purchaser build a house thereon and live in that house for a specified period of time.

Applications for purchase of the land are called by the Townsville City Council and, if more applications are received than there are allotments available, a ballot is conducted to determine the successful applicants. Quite a deal of the Townsville land has already been developed and sold, and I understand that further allotments are presently being developed under this scheme.

Representations have been made to the Government by other local authorities that they should be placed in a position similar to that of the Townsville City Council in regard to the disposal of land in rapidly developing areas to assist first home-buyers.

It is felt that there is merit in this proposal, but it is not considered desirable that a local authority should act as an enterpreneur in these circumstances in buying and developing land on the open market in competition with private enterprise.

The Bill provides, therefore, that a local authority will be empowered to sell, for residential purposes, land that it has acquired for arrears of rates or for any other purpose approved by the Governor in Council, on a basis similar to that on which the Townsville City Council is empowered to sell land under the Townsville City Council (Sale of Land) Act. That will have the effect of controlling the circumstances in which a local authority may enter the development market and, as in the case of the Townsville situation, the terms and conditions upon which a local authority may sell land under such a scheme will have to be approved by the Governor in Council before it undertakes development.

A number of other miscellaneous amendments are contained in the Bill designed to facilitate the administration of the Act by local authorities and to increase penalties for certain offences under the Act where existing penalties are out of date.

I am sure that honourable members will agree that the amendments to the Local Government Act which I have outlined are desirable amendments and will enhance the position of local government in this State. As I stated earlier, a number of the proposals included in the Bill have been initiated by the Local Government Association of Queensland, and this serves to illustrate the close co-operation that exists between the association and the Government in keeping local government in this State in the forefront of local government in Australia.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Shaw, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Citizens Against Road Slaughter

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (11.57 p.m.): One thing that makes me proud of my fellow-Australians is their willingness to get off their tails and help other people. Tonight, I wish to refer to an organisation and to the way in which it has been treated by the Government.

The organisation is known as the Citizens Against Road Slaughter—CARS. The objects of the organisation are clearly set out in the constitution that has been lodged with, and approved by, the Department of Justice. The first object touches on road safety. It is—

> "To petition or make submission to Federal, State or Local Governments to investigate a full and urgent enquiry into every aspect of 'preventable' road collision."

Several similar objects deal with the pressure that should be exerted on various authorities, particularly the State Government.

Another object of the organisation is to provide support of a compassionate nature and practical assistance to road trauma victims and their families. If necessary, it provides legal support for such people. It maintains a family support group for road trauma victims, in the same way as Legacy does for the families of ex-servicemen. If needed, the organisation will purchase therapeutic equipment for physically handicapped road victims in this State.

From that, it can be seen quite clearly that from time to time modest funds are required to promote those objects. Naturally, as with any other community organisation, the only place in which CARS can appeal for funds is in the community. Consequently, the organisation made applications to the Justice Department.

What happened to those applications? Firstly, the organistion sought registration as an approved association under the Art Unions and Amusements Act. That application was rejected outright. It then made an application for sanctions under the Collections Act. Once more the application was rejected. The applications were made in July last year and they have just been rejected. The Justice Department had four goes at the applications. Special meetings were held with the organisation to alter its constitution and get it approved.

The vice-president and publicity officer of the organisation was given the third degree, and the main question that Government officers kept firing at him was, "Do you intend raising money from the public for the purpose of financing legal action against politicians?" Once more the National Party Government displayed its fear.

The organisation made its first application in July last year. On 27 February an answer was finally received from the under secretary, Department of Justice, to the effect that the application was not recommended because road safety activities are presently catered for by existing organisations. Which road safety organisation provides compassion and care for people who have been subjected to the trauma of road accidents? Which road safety organisation provides help for the families of road accident victims and therapeutic equipment and other services for victims? Which road safety organisation will provide cars for funeral services and family support for road accident victims?

Many other organisations within the community provide a similar type of care in other circumstances. I have already named Legacy, and others include the Society of St Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army. CARS is concerned mainly with road accident victims and specialises in helping them. The other organisations that I have mentioned have sanctions and can raise funds.

I make the accusation that the organisation was refused sanctions, not for the reasons stated, but because it was prepared to tell the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) that it was dissatisfied with his administration of road safety in Queensland.

In the name of humanity, I call on the Government to put political bias aside and to approve the activities of the Citizens Against Road Slaughter. That organisation is harnessing a strong community spirit for the common good of all. The Government should not be victimising it in the way in which it is. Rather, it should be doing all that it can to help organisations such as CARS, which are willing to do something positive in a very practical way for road safety and for road accident victims. All honourable members are aware of such traumas in their electorates.

Time expired.

Malpractice in Legal Profession

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (12.2 a.m.): On a number of occasions I have risen in this place to bring to the notice of the Parliament and the people of Queensland the malpractice that occurs in the legal profession. Following upon the questions that I asked in this place last week about a Federal member of Parliament and the operation of his law practice, I will make a few more points.

Mr Burns: You're flogging a dead horse.

Mr MENZEL: I assure the honourable member for Lytton that I am not flogging a dead horse and, at the conclusion of my speech, I will be tabling documents to back up my claims.

I wish to comment first on the editorial that appeared in "The Cairns Post" on 4 March 1985 in which a challenge was issued to me to substantiate my claims or to apologise to the honourable member for Leichhardt (Mr Gayler). I assure the House that I will not apologise to Mr Gayler. However, in my view, the credibility of "The Cairns Post" is at stake.

Last year, the honourable member for Leichhardt asked of the Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin) a Dorothy Dix question about me when I was in Japan or Korea on a parliamentary delegation. In his answer, the Minister for Primary Industry said that I had chased cane-farmers though drains, or something like that. It was an incredible answer to an incredible question from Mr Gayler, who is supposedly a responsible person.

At the time, I noticed that "The Cairns Post" did not condemn the honourable member for Leichhardt or the Minister for Primary Industry over this matter.

Everyone in far-north Queensland knows how biased the editor of "The Cairns Post" is against the National Party and of his pro-Labor bias.

I have in my hands a photocopy of a letter, the original of which I gave to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General this afternoon. The author of the letter has set out his dealings with the member for Leichhardt and the law firm of Gayler & Cleland, and I allege malpractice by that firm. I lay on the table of the House the copy of that letter as well as other correspondence between this person and Gayler & Cleland.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the documents on the table.

On the advice of Mal Cleland, the author of the letter had originally sued through Gayler & Cleland for damages of $30,000. Later, the person was advised to go for $10,000 and, in the end, to go for $5,000 plus costs. However, a reading of the documents reveals that the plaintiff, because of an oversight by the solicitors, ended up with far less than $5,000. The way that this person was misled is very serious.

My other point is that the person concerned went to John Gayler as the member for Leichhardt. Gayler's secretary advised him to go to Gayler & Cleland to get legal advice. That firm signed the person up on legal aid. Obviously Mr Gayler used his position as a member of Parliament for financial gain. That was the point of my question last week to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

Time expired.

Queensland Economy

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (12.7 a.m.): This morning I wish to speak about the economy of Queensland and how all the citizens of the State should be concerned. Last Sunday's "Sunday Mail" carries the following article, which is about a report by a Mr Phil Day—

> "The report, Queensland: Facing the Issues, criticises State Government performance in several key areas—notably a 'complacent preoccupation with tourism', excessive reliance on mineral resources, lack of action to restructure industry and a poor record in education."

In the same newspaper Mr Ian Miller stated—

> "My, how things do change. Surely, Slowly, and most unfortunately for our state economy, the myth is starting to be exposed for what it is.
>
> The facts are that unemployment is up, bankruptcies are up, electricity costs are up, private capital investment is down and other reliable economic indicators are below the national average.
>
> Politically what this has done is to inject a stark new element of concern into the Queensland economic debate and to place the State Government in a position where it is unprepared and vulnerable."

The people of Queensland should be concerned when they read that Queensland has the highest percentage of unemployment in the nation—more than 11.1 per cent, which is 120 000 persons, some of whom are young people who have left school and some of whom are tradesmen and professional people.

In 1984, bankruptcies in Queensland rose to a record level of 944, which is an increase of 27.1 per cent over the 1983 figures.

Honourable members know that the only growing industries in the State are drug-selling, prostitution and escort agencies. A record number of child sex abuse cases have been confirmed. The number of confirmed child sex abuse cases in 1984 was 184, which is an increase of 183 per cent on the 1983 figures. The only thing that is growing in Queensland is vice.

Child pornography is a major concern of the Director of Prosecutions (Mr Sturgess) in this State. The Minister for Justice is reported as saying—

> "Mr Sturgess, Director of Prosecutions, has reported some matters to me that would not be acceptable in the animal kingdom, let alone in civilised human beings."

A major national survey of business shows that Queensland has fallen badly behind other States in the economic recovery. Queensland has relied heavily on tourism. Members of this Assembly who represent Gold Coast electorates should be concerned when they read the "Gold Coast Bulletin" or other newspapers, such as "What's On at the Coast This Week". They will find pages and pages of advertisements for prostitution, escort agencies and what have you. That is the type of thing that tourists are attracting. That is the only industry that is growing in this State.

Mr Alison: You want to legalise homosexuality.

Mr PREST: The honourable member would be the proprietor of a flourishing business. We have heard all about the honourable member for Maryborough. He should not talk about homosexuality, because he is a known person.

When the Government finds itself in an economic mess, it always comes up with the old annuals. It never ceases to amaze me that when Government members find themselves in trouble, they come up with the old propaganda of great industrial development taking place in the State. They have referred to a steelworks for Gladstone, a coke plant for Gladstone, and an ammonia and urea project worth $330m for Gladstone. They are still talking about the coke plant.

Time expired.

Reporting of Motor Vehicle Accident by Media

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (12.13 a.m.): Tonight I wish to raise a very, very delicate issue. I sincerely hope that I can do justice to the issue to be discussed, and I also hope that I can be sensitive to the profound emotions that such issues raise.

Some time ago, my immediate relatives and I had the misfortune to have a comparatively long-standing family friend killed in a motor vehicle accident. This individual was a particularly close friend of my brother, his wife and family. Mainly through that friendship I got to know that person very well. He was a fine individual indeed. He was only in his mid-thirties, with a wife and three children. Their oldest daughter is just 15 years of age. Like most young men, he had worked hard to provide his wife and family with a lovely home and a comfortable life-style.

As mentioned previously, he was killed some time ago whilst on his way home from work. We are not sure what really happened. All we know is that his motor car collided with another vehicle. As a result of that accident he was killed instantly. His injuries were indescribably horrific, and I know that his wife and family and friends find some comfort in the fact that he did not suffer in any way.

The accident happened late in the afternoon. His wife and eldest daughter had prepared the evening dinner. Since he had not arrived home, they decided to go into the lounge-room to sit down and watch the news on television. Sitting watching the television news were both his wife and his eldest daughter, whilst the two other children were playing nearby. To their utter and complete dismay, they saw the accident on television. They recognised the car from both its general features and the number plate. That was the very first news that they had received of the accident and the first time that both the wife and the family knew that their husband and father had been killed in a road accident.

I cannot describe the trauma of that family. My sister-in-law, who spoke to them yesterday, told me tonight that the wife and the daughters, particularly the eldest daughter, are totally devastated and cannot even at this time really bring themselves round to discuss the matter.

Lately, I have become somewhat disgusted by the activities of certain sections of the mass media. At times, their insensitivity borders on barbarism. How is it that a television channel can broadcast vivid pictures and descriptions of a fatal accident before the immediate family and relatives have been notified? It appears that no attempt whatsoever was made by the television channel concerned to check with the civil authorities to ensure that the family had in fact been notified.

I raise this matter tonight for three reasons. Firstly, I place on record my feeling that this incident is one of several similar incidents in recent years that reflects the growing tendency towards insensitivity on the part of certain sections of the mass media. I sincerely hope that that tendency will not continue.

Secondly, I hope that the television channels look carefully at and review their policies in relation to broadcasting material of this nature. It is important that such a policy should include a clause specifying that a check should be made with civil authorities to ensure that the families and relatives of people involved in road accidents, particularly fatal accidents, are notified before the matter is broadcast.

Thirdly, I hope that such an incident never occurs again. After all, some human issues transcend the preoccupation of the media with sensationalism and the creation of a news story.

Today I mentioned the incident to the honourable member for Toowoomba North (Mr McPhie). He told me of a similar case in which the wives of six airmen who had been killed in an air crash first heard of the incident by listening to a radio broadcast.

The activities of the media in relation to incidents such as that increase the trauma of families and are not in the best interests of society.

Estimated Electricity Accounts; Street-lighting in New Housing Estates

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (12.17 a.m.): I raise the matter of the need for an appeal provision, for a person with the powers of an ombudsman, or for some form of arbitration in the electricity supply industry.

Most honourable members are aware that the SEQEB sends a letter to the consumer or, when the bill arrives, the consumer is told that the meterman has not been able to read the meter because a dog kept him out or he could not see the meter and he has averaged the account. People will tell you that they have only a budgerigar, but still the story is told that the meterman cannot enter the premises to read the meter.

A friend of mine wrote to me concerning a problem that he had. In January of 1985, the SEQEB sent him a letter. It reads as follows—

> "We confirm that, on 19th November, 1984, we had our representative call at your premises and examine water heater meter No. 381226. He found that, although the meter disc rotated, it did not record consumption of energy. New meter No. 488199, reading zero, was then installed in place of the faulty meter.
>
> From our history of meter registrations, it was apparent meter No. 381226 ceased to function correctly during the August, 1983 quarter, and accounts were undercharged."

He has no way of knowing whether or not that is true. Most consumers do not read their meters. The consumer would not know whether that was a statement of fact or not. He just has to accept it.

The letter continues—

> "However, we have confined our adjustment of accounts to the quarters ended November, 1983 to November, 1984."

The regulation states that that can be done only for 12 months.

The letter goes on—

> "A check reading of meter No. 488199, taken by our representative on 13th December, 1984, showed that 238 kilowatt hours had been registered since 19th November, 1984."

In that very short period from 19 November 1984 to 13 December 1984 the SEQEB representative estimated my friend's use of hot water for the full period from November 1983 to November 1984.

The letter further states—

> "We have based our estimates on consumption registered during the check period.
>
> We now enclose our debit statement for $156.13 up to 9th August, 1984, with our amended November account."

The SEQEB has said to this fellow, "Your meter didn't work. We say that it didn't work." He has no proof that it didn't work. I have here a set or readings. No-one knows whether or not they are correct, because very few consumers go down and check each month and write down what the meter readings are.

According to the SEQEB, the meter did not work. It says that between 19 November 1984 and 13 December 1984 he used so much electricity. He was told, "On the basis of that figure, we estimate that during the past 12 months you have used a certain amount of electricity. You owe it to us. If you do not pay the account, we will cut your power off."

That is just not good enough. What if the man was away for six months or eight months in the last 12 months? What if the man did not use the hot water system? What if the hot water system broke down during that period? He has no right of appeal.

I wrote to SEQEB on his wife's behalf. A copy of the regulations was forwarded to me, along with a few explanations. However, I point out that the things that were conveyed to me by the South East Queensland Electricity Board were exactly the same as the things conveyed some months previously to the lady concerned. Such conduct is not good enough.

Statutory authorities that have been established by the Government should be made the subject of an appeal lodged by the consumer. I point out that ordinary consumers are compelled to deal with such authorities, and the attitude conveyed by the authority is that, if the account is not paid, electricity will be disconnected, and a reconnection fee is then payable.

Provision should be made for the ordinary citizen to approach a control body other than the authority and lodge a complaint about the way in which the consumer has been treated. If statutory authorities are to be vested with widespread powers, surely an independent body of review should be established that will be able to monitor the activities of the statutory authority in accordance with the regulations approved by the Parliament. The review body should have the power to override the statutory authority's ability to nominate an amount that is based on a calculation of consumption over a 12-month period, in cases in which a meter has not accurately recorded the number of units.

I inform the House that I recently moved into a new housing estate in my electorate. I telephoned the Brisbane City Council to ask when street lights would be provided. The reply I received was to the effect that the Brisbane City Council had already paid an amount of money to SEQEB, and I was asked to check with the statutory authority. When I telephoned SEQEB, I was informed that the statutory authority had to await instructions from the council. I then telephoned the council again and asked whether the council had instructed SEQEB to install street lights, in view of the fact that the estate was completely sold out and had become established. The council told me that the instruction had been issued to SEQEB, but SEQEB told me that a period of two or three years would probably elapse before the street lights were provided.

In my electorate, new estates have been established in Tingalpa and are almost completely developed. Yet SEQEB, having accepted the money from the Brisbane City Council, has not installed one street light in the area. I ask honourable members to bear in mind that new estates are inhabited by large numbers of young children. The Government has been involved in inquiries into attacks on young children and the need for protection of families. It is a well known fact that rape and violence are offences that recur with increasing incidence. In addition to that, an increase in the number of breaking and entering offences in residential areas has occurred.

Yet a multimillion-dollar electricity authority such as SEQEB is doing nothing to provide the basic services that people need. I invite honourable members to drive home with me to the area of my electorate and notice the difference between areas that have street lights installed and the areas that do not. In the areas of new residential estates, not one street light will be found, and honourable members would soon realise how dark a new estate can be without street-lighting.

The absence of street-lighting provides an ideal opportunity for a criminal who is operating in the area. I mention that every building contractor who works in the area of my electorate has lost a substantial amount of money because of the theft of building materials and tools from houses that are presently under construction. Every one of the houses under construction in my electorate has been burgled, and I particularly mention a house that is situated near mine which was broken into and had most of the electrical goods and equipment stolen out of it.

It is not good enough for the SEQEB to say that street-lighting will be installed in two or three years' time. I reiterate that no right of appeal exists, and nothing can be done. If one were to write to the general manager, he may not say directly, "Go and jump in the lake", but he may as well do, because the terms of his letter have a similar effect.

Members of the Opposition feel it is unacceptable for a statutory authority such as SEQEB to state that meters cannot be read because a dog has been present in the yard. When dogs are not a problem, the excuse is offered that the meters are not operating and then the authority charges a higher amount based on an estimate of electricity consumption. It is time that the Government made statutory authorities subject to the right of appeal by an ordinary citizen.

Time expired.

Queensland Economy

Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (12.22 a.m.): In bringing the debate to its conclusion, I will speak very briefly about the problems confronting the economy. I refer mainly to one facet of the economy that concerns agricultural and mining industries.

The unfortunate electricity strike and secondary boycotts, and the ramifications that have flowed as a result of those events, have had a very definite and tragic influence on the productivity of this State. The overall economic outlook is far worse now than it was at the beginning of the year. The mining and agricultural industries have experienced difficult times recently, and additional problems that are caused by industrial disputes cannot be endured over a period of three or four weeks, as has recently occurred.

By examining the available figures, I hope to successfully illustrate the points I wish to make. The agricultural forecast for 1985 shows that the income to be derived from agricultural products is estimated to decrease by 17 per cent from the amount derived last year. Fortunately, industries such as beef and lamb have improved slightly, but grain industries such as wheat are in decline. I especially mention the sugar industry which is also in decline.

Agricultural production is cyclic, with some good years and some bad years. At the moment the outlook is not good. The outlook for mining is similarly down. Coal is not doing very well and is only just holding its own on world markets. As long as the coal-miners remain at work and coal is being shipped, the outlook is all right, but it worsens very rapidly when, because of a month-long strike, very little coal is being shipped. The outlook for copper is not good, although it is probably Queensland's main mineral export after coal.

Like many Third World countries, Queensland depends very heavily on its mining and agricultural exports. For years they have been doing a wonderful job, but now all is not well. Producers have to look to their competitiveness on world markets and ensure that it is improved to the extent required to maintain their present position.

Australia's position in the implementation of new technology presents no problems. The work-rate of employees, when they want to work, is good. But increased costs of production are one factor causing great problems to all industries. The biggest single component in higher costs is increased wages. The cost of manpower, whether it be at the coal-face working machinery, on the farm working machinery, in the processing areas, whether they be at Mount Isa or Townsville, on the wharves from which the coal and other minerals are shipped, or even in the silos or the railways which haul the grain, is still the biggest single factor in increased costs of production. Those increased costs are due mainly to industrial action. Higher and higher wages have had to be paid, in many cases unnecessarily.

Mr Burns: Are you suggesting that they should reduce wages?

Mr McPHIE: I know that the increases are associated with inflation. The two go hand in hand.

Australian industries are pricing many of their commodities out of world markets. Members should consider the figures that I am about to cite. The first set of figures deals with exports as a share of gross domestic product, with 1958 as the base year and 1982 as the last year for which I have figures. In that time France doubled its share; Canada, Germany, Sweden and the United States of America increased their share by 75 per cent, but the Australian effort was a miserable increase of 10 per cent.

I turn next to the export league ladder to see how Australia stands. Australia has dropped steadily from No. 8 position in 1954 to No. 19 in 1984. Nations such as Switzerland, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Mexico and even Indonesia are now ahead of Australia on the list, again only because Australia is pricing itself out of the market.

The third set figures relates to the export of manufactured products. I cite it so that members will see that the problem is not confined to the mining and agricultural areas. The figures relate to two 10-year periods. In 1963, Australia produced $400m worth of manufactured products; in 1973 the production increased to $3 billion and in 1984 it increased to $4 billion. That figure is matched by Malaysia, which most Australians regard as a relatively small country. In the same period Germany increased its production value from $13 billion to $61 billion and then to $156 billion—a massive increase. Japan increased its production value from $5 billion to $35 billion and then to $143 billion—a massive increase similar to that of Germany. In the United Kingdom the figure rose from $10 billion to $26 billion and then to $63 billion. If members would like to hear about a country which started from a base similar to that of Australia, I point out that, in 1963 Hong Kong's production value was $1 billion, in 1973 it rose to $5 billion and by 1984 it had risen to $21 billion.

In order for Australian industry to survive, it has to become competitive on world markets. It does not have a chance of doing that while unions continue with industrial action, as they have in past weeks, and continually demand excessive and regular wage increases.

Time expired.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.30 a.m. (Wednesday).